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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE PEOPLE'S MALAKHII--MYKOLA KULISH

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The People's Malakhii--Mykola Kulish" submitted by Gordon Gordey in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

James V. DeFelice
Supervisor

Date September 14, 1973

THE PEOPLE'S MALAKHII

by Mykola Kulish

Mykola Kulish was born in the village Chaplyna, Dniprovs'k district, in Kherson province in the Ukraine on December 6, 1892. His death is recorded by Soviet sources as having occured in 1942, eight years after his exile to the Solovki Islands in the White Sea because of his alleged nationalistic deviations.

Kulish's dramatic works distinguish him as the Ukraine's foremost modern playwright. During his lifetime he wrote the plays 97 (1924), Commune in the Steppes (1925), Khulii Khuryna (1926), Zona (1926), Thus Perished Huska (1927), The People's Malakhii (1928), Myna Mazailo (1929), The Sonata Pathetique (1931), Farewell My Village (1932), Maklena Grasa (1933), Blind Alley, Such, Dialogues, (All three written sometime in 1933-34). In the period 1933-34 Kulish also wrote a film scenario Paryzhkom.

The People's Malakhii is a tragi-comedy in five acts written by Ukrainian playwright, Mykola Kulish, and translated by Gordon Gordey.

The source of the translation has been the Ukrainian version published by the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Mykola Kulish-Tvory, while their source has been the version published by Kulish himself in the periodical, The Literary Fair, Vol. 9 (139), August, 1929.

The plot of The People's Malakhii focuses on the conflict between Malakhii Stakanchyk's idealist aspirations and the Soviet reality. After having walled himself up in a closet for two years where he read his fill of Bolshevik books, Malakhii emerges and imagines himself as a prophet who will carry out the immediate reform of the individual. Carrying his sky-blue dreams Malakhii journeys from his home village of Yesterday, to Kharkiv, then the capital of the Ukraine, to confinement in an insane asylum, to the foundry called the Sickle and Hammer, and then finally to a Kharkiv brothel where he truly loses all grip on reality. The People's Malakhii was staged by the Berezil ensemble in Kharkiv in three revised versions due to censorship. The play was eventually banned from performance during the 1929-30 season of the Berezil ensemble and Kulish was forced to publish a public statement regarding its oppositional tendencies.

NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

The following table shows the transliteration system for Ukrainian used in this study:

а	a	з	z	о	o	ч	ch
б	b	и	y	п	p	ш	sh
в	v	і	i	р	r	щ	shch
г	h	ї	ї	с	s	ь	'
ґ	g	й	i	т	t	ю	iu
д	d	к	k	у	u	я	ia
е	e	л	l	ф	f		
є	ie	м	m	х	kh		
ж	zh	н	n	ц	ts		

Ukrainian place names have been given the forms most familiar to English readers. Given names have retained their Ukrainian forms.

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MYKOLA KULISH

Mykola Kulish's commitment to the development of Ukrainian literature and the contribution of his dramatic works to the modern Ukrainian theatre distinguish him as the Ukraine's foremost playwright. Kulish's struggles as a theatre artist and his eventual imprisonment in 1934 exemplified his dilemma towards the Soviet reality of which he was an active part and which with great effort he endeavored to understand.

In her Remembrances Kulish's wife, Antonina, recalls their last conversation at NKVD headquarters in Kiev.

> "Good-bye my dearest Mykola. Hold on and keep strong. Don't worry and don't think about us. Somehow everything will settle itself. May you be healthy and do not forget that we will never forget about you."
>
> Mykola kissed my hands and I kissed his cold hands. I said, "We are not saying good-bye for ten days and not for ten years, but perhaps forever!"
>
> With much grief and suffering with great pain Mykola said to me, "Good-bye, my little old one, and forgive me for all that I've done. I know how difficult it will be for you and the children!"
>
> We tore ourselves away from each other, and Mykola started to walk away. I shouted; "Mykola, look at me one more time!"
>
> Mykola, very sadly, almost as if his eyes could not see, looked somewhere above my head. This was his last look of goodbye.[1]

Soon after this conversation Kulish was transported to II

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[1] Mykola Kulish-Tvory, ed. by Hryhory Kostiuk (United States: Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1955), p. 429. Quotation translated by Gordon Gordey.

Isolation camp on the Solovki Islands in the White Sea. On June 15, 1837 Antonina received her last letter and communication from her imprisoned husband.

> My dearest Tosia. I am always waiting for your letters. The last letter of yours I received May 10, I feel sad that apparently you have not received my letters. It appears that I must repeat everything that I wrote to you in the former letters. It is not necessary that you send parcels. Instead of parcels, in accordance with the new privileges, monetary notes are allowed. But don't worry about sending monetary notes, my dearest, because I don;t need them. I still have some money left over from last year's ten karbovanets, and this will last me for three to four months. If I need any money I'll write to you. I am worried that I am not receiving letters from you about your health and the children's. I yearn for you and my grief is like a disease. Write more about yourself my little old one. About your well-being and the children's health. About my health I've already written to you. In all I feel myself physically fine. There are attacks of rheumatism and pains in my heart, but they are not severe, so don't worry about me my dearest. To you and the children I am sending my affectionate greetings. I ponder and think about all of you every minute. I wish you and the children health and well-being . . . you could not imagine my dear little old one!
>
> Your M.[2]

Soviet sources record Kulish's death as occurring in 1942, five years after this last letter. That Kulish's life was to terminate in an isolated monastary cell at a forced labor camp was never apparent in his early years as a student and soldier.

Mykola Kulish was born into a peasant family on December 6, 1892 in the village Chaplyna Dniprovs'k district in Kherson province in the Ukraine. During his first years at

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[2]Ibid., p. 360.

school Kulish displayed encouraging academic promise. With strong guidance from his teachers, he received a thorough grade school education which qualified him to apply to the Odessa University in 1914 to the faculty of historical philology. Unfortunately these plans were interrupted by Kulish's conscription into the Russian Imperial Army at the outbreak of the First World War. Kulish's abilities served him well in the army, where he became an ardent revolutionary of nationalist orientation, and by 1917 had attained the rank of Staff Captain. In the same year of his promotion Kulish inexplicably abandoned his chances of a military career and returned to Oleshki, the village of his early school years. There he became a teacher and a Party agitator. Kulish's success as an agitator resulted in his acceptance into the Communist Party in 1919. His success as a teacher earned him a promotion to the post of Senior Inspector of Social Education in the Commissariat of Education in Odessa.

In 1923 Kulish became a member of literary group known as HART (Tempering) whose constitutional aims were:

> . . . to unite the proletarian writers of the Ukraine, including artists active in the field of the theatre, art, and music, who, using the Ukrainian language as a means of artistic expression, aim at the creation of one international Communist culture, and who spread Communist ideology and fight against the petit-bourgeois propertied ideology.[3]

---

[3]George Luckyj, Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine, 1917-1934 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 47.

HART had been formed in January of 1923 to complement the Soviet policy of Ukrainianization which at that time encouraged the widest possible cultural and linguistic freedom for Ukrainian nationalism.

Kulish's association with HART was highlighted by his acquaintance with Mykola Khvyl'ovyi, a writer of romantic and impressionistic short stories on contemporary subjects. Khvyl'ovyi's idealism and romanticism is exemplified through this statement he wrote in reference to himself during those early years of Soviet rule.

> I passionately love the sky, the grass, the stars, pensive evenings, and soft autumn mornings . . . all that perfumes the sadly gay land of our motley life. I madly love the gentle women with good, wise eyes and bitterly regret that I was not destined to be born as shapely as a leopard. I also love our Ukrainian steppes swept by the blue storm of civil war. I love our cherry orchards . . . I believe in the distant Commune. I believe in it so fiercely that I am ready to die for it. I am a dreamer, and from the height of my incomparable insolence I spit on the skeptics of our age.[4]

Kulish, like Khvyl'ovyi, shared the same heightened feeling towards the revolutionary struggle. On November 9, 1924 Kulish had his debut as a dramatist at the Franko Theatre in Kharkiv which presented his play 97 under the direction of Hnat Iura. The plot of the play 97 dealt with the famine of 1921-1922. Shabliovsky a contemporary Soviet scholar, expressed the following reaction to this dramatic work:

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[4]Ibid., p. 48.

> M. Kulish's play 97, the first Soviet Ukrainian social dramatic work, portrays the inimitable character of the poor peasant Musiy Kopiska who goes through that epochal transformation engendered by Soviet reality. In this 'unlettered' and downtrodden person lofty feelings of responsibility to the people and faith in their historical mission are awakened . . . .[5]

In form 97 bore a strong influence of the pobutovy (ethnographical) theatre. The pobutovy theatre form had been established in the 1880's by order of the Tsarist administration which dictated that Ukrainian theatrical presentations could only explore limited themes based on village life. So dominant and firmly implanted was the pobutovy form that new plays which attempted innovative dramatic forms, such as those by Lesia Ukrainka, O. Oles', and V. Vynnychenko, resulted in disillusionment. Yosip Hirniak, an actor during this period, observed,

> The partial successes and resounding failures convinced the actors and even supporters of the pobutovy theatre that a new theatre, and a new type of actor and, most important, a new producer (director) who would create, teach and reform the theatre were needed.[6]

Even the Ukrainianization policy of the Soviet regime was unable to break the spell of the pobutovy form on the rightest trend in the theatre. In 1924 the main repertoire of the Franko Theatre still consisted of pobutovy plays by M. Kropyvnyts'kyi, M. Staryts'kyi and I. Karpenko-Karyi.

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[5]Yevhan Shabliovsky, Ukrainian Literature Through the Ages (Kiev: Mistetstvo Publishers, 1970), p. 208.

[6]Yosip Hirniak, "Birth and Death of the Modern Ukrainian Theatre," Soviet Theatres, 1917-1941, ed. by Martha Bradshaw (New York, 1954), p. 255.

Kulish's second play, Commune in the Steppes, was staged in 1925 by the Berezil Theatre in Kharkiv under the direction of Les Kurbas. The expressionistic concepts used in the play's staging by Kurbas greatly influenced Kulish as these concepts were very different from the naturalistic treatment 97 was given by the Franko Theatre. He was also impressed that Commune in the Steppes hadn't been subjected to formal alterations by the Berezil theatre group whose practice it was to approach dramatic material by reworking it in its dramaturgic laboratory.

Yosip Hirniak's reactions to the themes of Kulish's first two plays reflect a different attitude from Shabliovsky's. Hirniak writes:

> In these first dramas Kulish tried to speak the language of a faithful Communist. However, when he saw the facts and the truth, as a true writer, he described them in the language of truth. He drew powerful portraits of the famine which the Communist Party was attempting to blame on attacks against the regime by inimical elements. However, actuality proved it to be otherwise; life itself showed that the Bolshevik government was neither willing nor able to find a solution to this dreadful situation. Kulish's early plays left this impression to the audience.[7]

In this same year as the staging of Commune in the Steppes, Ellan Blakytnyi, the leader of HART died. Problems of leadership with HART resulted in the formation of a new literary group known as VAPLITE (Free Academy of Proletarian Literature) under the chairmanship of Mykola Khvyl'ovyi

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[7] Ibid., p. 306.

Kulish became a member of VAPLITE because in 1925 he had moved to Kharkiv due to his appointment as director of The All-Ukrainian Drama Committee at the Commissariat of Education.

In 1926 Kulish wrote a play entitled Khulii Khuryna, a satire of Soviet officials during the time of the New Economic Policy. In the same year Kulish wrote Zona a play which dealt with the problem of Party purges, intrigues of Party climbers, and unjust accusations against honest Party members. Zona and Khulii Khuryna were more concrete expressions of Kulish's growing disillusionment with the regime. A year later he wrote Thus Perished Huska which also continued in the same vein.

Kulish's next play was The People's Malakhii. V. Revutsky comments about the play's genesis:

> The idea of writing the following play, Narodny Malakhi [The People's Malakhii] undoubtedly originated during a 1927 New Year's Eve party which was arranged with the participation of members of Berezil and VAPLITE. Kulish started writing The People's Malakii in January and in July he read the text of the play to Berezil Ensemble.[8]

It is my opinion that part of the play's genesis lies in the teachings of the twelfth prophet of the Lord: Malachi. Hirniak, who was a member of the Berezil ensemble at that time, records the following reaction to the first reading:

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[8]Valerian Revutsky, Mykola Kulish in the Modern Ukrainian Theatre," Slavonic and East European Review, XLIX (July, 1971), p. 359.

> The entire acting ensemble and the artistic director of the Berezil [Les Kurbas] were impressed with the astonishing growth of the dramatist and with his radically changed literary style. In such a short period of close association with the theatre, only a person with great talent and of unusual flexibility could have comprehended and adopted its creative methods, which were the results of ten years of intensive work and experimentation. The National Malakhii [The People's Malakhii] showed that the new theatre at last had a playwright.[9]

Kulish's new approach to dramatic form complemented Kurbas's approach to theatre and the aims of the Berezil. Kurbas in commenting on these aims stated:

> The main body of spectators attending the greater number of performances is composed of various groups of working intelligentsia, officials, ordinary petty bourgeois and even NEP-men (New Economic Policy-men). It is mainly they who dictate their taste to the theatre . . . They accept the Soviet regime since it enables them to earn their living, as it did in the olden days. They are not even monarchists, but simply Philistines who became bankrupt as the representatives of culture and bearers of a certain idea. They are practising the art of mimicry and try to save their skins in all circumstances. They do not create any new forms in the field of life and therefore are unable to grasp the desire for new forms in the field of art. They are attracted to the theatre not by art but by the personal performances of the actors. They are fond of bare flesh on the stage and like direct crude emotions, especially with sentimental overtones, since this is the central interest of their lives. They are steady consumers of life, but never its creators. And it is these Philistines who, in the end have outlived and outcried everyone else.[10]

On March 2, 1928 a community preview of The People's Malakhii took place before The Repertoire Committee and The

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[9]Yosip Hirniak, "Birth and Death of the Modern Ukrainian Theatre," Soviet Theatres, 1917-1941, ed. by Martha Bradshaw (New York, 1954), p. 310.

[10]Valerian Revutsky, "The Prophetic Madman," Canadian Slavonic Papers, I (1956) pp. 47-48.

National Commissariat of Education. These officials immediately recognized the oppositional tendencies of the play but because the regime respected Kulish's and Kurbas's artistic authority, they found it difficult to have the play withdrawn. Thus with some recommendations for change and the removal of objectionable passages The People's Malakhii was permitted to premiere on March 31, 1928.

Reactions to The People's Malakhii were many and varied. Hirniak wrote:

> Rarely has a play aroused such a storm of arguments, and discussion, such fiery attackers as did the premiere of The National Malakhyi (The People's Malakhii). The house was packed to the rafters at each daily performance. The audience, which represented all strata of society, participated in the play with emotion. Individual thoughts and phrases in the play were constantly repeated by the audience at meetings of Soviet organizations, in schools, and at home. On the streets of Kharkiv or at the meetings in worker's clubs one could hear quoted witticisms which with such extraordinary appropriateness indicated the unfortunate results of the policies and administration of the Soviet government.[11]

K. Kravchenko, in his review on the Proetars'ka Pravda wrote, ". . . a tremendous epoch-making event took place in the history of our theatre."[12]

Iurii Smolych, a theatre critic, received the play with the following reactions:

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[11]Yosip Hirniak, "Birth and Death of the Modern Ukrainian Theatre," Soviet Theatres, 1917-1941, ed. by Martha Bradshaw (New York, 1954), p. 313.

[12]Valerian Revutsky, "The Prophetic Madman," Canadian Slavonic Papers, I (1956), p. 49.

> Stakanchyk (Malakhii) is a sober-minded, interesting, and reasonably objective man. He is a small town thinker, and idealist who has lost his mental balance. Stakanchyk has grasped the meaning of the Revolution and, having grasped it develops a whole-hearted and at the same time, abstract love for it. Failing to understand the reality of the Revolution he loses himself in a sky-blue distance. Kulish personifies this image in the whimsical character of a lunatic and diagnoses him as a paranoic. Hence the whole conception of the play, for who listens to Malakhii, who finally understands him? Only the residents of the Saburova Dacha (a lunatic asylum); only in their midst does Malakhii find his loyal subjects. This shows the true meaning on Malakhii's plans for reforms; it turns out that, according to his projects, men should become loyal subjects with himself as their ruler. Malakhii The First . . . This is Malakhii's conception of sky-blue socialism.[13]

In recalling the production Smolych wrote:

> A masterpiece of acting--in the roles; Malakhii was played by [Marian] Krushel'nyts'kyi, Godfather by [yosip] Hirniak, and Luibunia by [Valentyna] Chystiakova. Forty years has passed but in my mind there stands every movement, every gesture, and every intonation of this artistic trio. A masterpiece of directing--it was a dramatic spectacle which one could sing note for note in the actor's intonations, agility of the groups movement, and in every individual gesture of the performer. Particularly the first act. The first act of the spectacle, The People's Malakhii, is the highest accomplishment of Kurbas's directorial activity and productions in the history of the Berezil.[14]

Leonid Skrypnyk, another theatre critic, wrote:

> Kulish's Malakhii is a Don Quixote; however he is not a Don Quixote of Communism, but of a single, insignificant, quasi-communist deviation. We remember that deviation: it was known at the time of its existence as instant socialism. Malakhii is a typical instant

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[13] Ibid., p. 50.

[14] Iurii Smolych, Rozpovid' Pro Nespokii (A Description of Unrest) (Kiev: Radian'kii Pys'mennyk, 1968), I, p. 64. Above quotation translated by Gordon Gordey.

socialist.[15]

Borys Kovalenko saw:

> . . . Stakanchyk as . . . symbol of the Ukrainian idea . . . a reformer of men who gets entangled with the hopeless opposition to the Soviet reality . . . The main idea of the tragedy consists in the incompatability of the Ukrainian national spirit with the principles of Communism.[16]

Ivan Dniprovs'kyi, a playwright and personal friend of Kulish's wrote in a letter to Kulish on April 14, 1928:

> We have learned from the newspapers about your Malakhii. I am heartily glad about it, though I know its meaning has been misunderstood. This means you have outstripped your epoch and given it a spectacle which will be understood by our exacting posterity. This is your good fortune; you are always keeping step with your epoch and it is not everybody's privilege to overtake it and to show it a strip of the future. You have brought together Sophocles and Shakespeare and have made them a part of our heritage. This is a link connecting the epochs which can only be seen in retrospect. Therefore have no doubt.[17]

By the end of the season the Repertoire Committee managed to satisfy their initial opposition to The People's Malakhii by gaining the support of Mykola Skrypnyk, the Commissar of Education, and of the Marxist critics who condemned the play. The People's Malakhii was closed and Kulish was forced to submit to Party discipline and admit partial correctness of the Marxist critics negative reactions to the play.

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[15]Valerian Revutsky, "The Prophetic Madman," Canadian Slavonic Papers, I (1956), p. 50.

[16]Ibid., p. 50.

[17]Ibid., p. 57.

With revisions, The People's Malakhii, was again passed for performance. After a short time during the Berezil's 1929-1930 season, the play was once again forbidden further performance. In addition Kulish was forced to publish a public statement in which he criticized and condemned his oppositional tendencies. The statement appeared in the Literary Gazette on February 28, 1931.

> Malakhii Stakanchyk, in demanding the immediate reform of man, voices politically oppositional sentences which are very reminiscent of the Trotskyite theories of the time . . . Besides this hero is armed . . . with nationalistic aphorisms . . . I did not oppose 'Malakhianism' with our revolutionary creative activity (the reconstruction period), the socialistic successes and the great achievement of the Party in the field of cultural-national growth. And in such a form the play assumed a politically harmful meaning by taking a stand against the Party through its expressions of Ukrainian national deviations. I eventually recognize all of my errors and condemn them as I condemn all those who were identified with them during my entire literary activity during 1927 and 1928.[18]

This self-condemnation by Kulish contrasted considerably with his speech on theatre taken from a debate on theatre art which lasted from 1927 to 1929. Even though there is no exact date for when this speech was delivered it does serve to express Kulish's true unpressured attitude towards his art form.

> I should like to endorse in particular that part (of Kurbas's speech) which defined drama as something which must disturb and awaken (the spectator) and

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[18]Yosip Hirniak, "Birth and Death of the Modern Ukrainian Theatre," Soviet Theatres, 1917-1941, ed. by Martha Bradshaw (New York, 1954), p. 315.

> outline (for him), sometimes very sharply, certain problems not always to his taste . . . Between drama, prose, and poetry there is always some sort of interrelation. I am now attempting to characterize our literature of the last two years. In this literature, lacking in titanic design, lacking even in theme, but full of talent, though narrow in subject matter and written only for the present day, weakness is evident to some extent in the quality and quantity of dramatic works. Moreover our writers avoid such important and burning topics, as, for instance, the national problem. I am asking here, as I asked during the literary conference in Moscow: 'Please show me the works which reflect and elucidate the national problem in the Ukraine. Where are those works?' I venture to state here, that in our literature there is a tendency to avoid these problems, since they are, so to speak, from the point of view of the writer's success and career, dangerous.[19]

Kulish's problems at this time were not solely with The People's Malakhii. In 1927 he had become president of VAPLITE succeeding Khvyl'ovyi who was removed from the organization due to outside pressures concerning Khvyl'ovyi's political and ideological errors. Stiffening controls of the Party over VAPLITE, which they the Party regarded as a center of Ukrainian cultural resistance, and the creation of a new organization of proletarian writers became a painful thorn to Kulish and his organization. The new organization, which called itself The All-Ukrainian Union of Proletarian Writers, directly opposed VAPLITE. In a fourteen to two vote in favor of dissolution of VAPLITE on January 12, 1928 Kulish , who was one of the two votes in

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[19]George Luckyj, Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine, 1917-34 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 150.

favor, stated:

> Our tragedy is that we are surrounded by a Philistine mob, and if we dissolve now there will obviously be repercussion. This is what holds me back--as a member of the Party. We must resolve the situation so as not to create anything which would in the slightest degree hurt the Soviet people. On no account should we create the impression that we have been 'smothered'.[20]

Even though VAPLITE disolved Kulish continued his involvement in literary politics by organizing new writers and former members fo VAPLITE into publishing two new journals, The Literary Fair and Prolifront.

His playwriting had not been suppressed by his problems with The People's Malakhii either. Kulish's next play, Myna Mazailo, written in 1929, took the form of a comedy ridiculing the imperialistic shortsightedness of Moscow in handling Nationalist matters in the Ukraine. It was not long before the Berezil's strong production of Myna Mazailo, which had been playing to capacity house for the for the entire season, was severly attacked by the Marxist critics on grounds of nationalism.

In 1931 Kulish wrote an expressionistic drama entitled The Sonata Pathetique, which investigated the conflict between three camps: the national Ukrainian, the Bolshevik, and the White Russian Tsarists. It was banned from presentation in the Ukraine but was performed in Russian translation

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[20]George Luckyj, "The Battle for Literature in the Soviet Ukraine," Harvard Slavic Studies, III (1957), p. 242.

at the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow under the direction of Tairov. On March 24, 1932 The Sonata Pathetique was banned from presentation at the Kamerny and the Leningrad Theatre of Drama where it has also been playing.

In 1932 Kulish wrote another play called, Farewell My Village.

By 1933 the tension of literary politics between the Soviet government and the privileges of Ukrainian writers reached a climax. Having invited all his friends to his home, including Kulish, and after having a fine dinner and party Mykola Khvyl'ovyi committed suicide. V. P. (pseudonym) describes the details of Khvyl'ovyi's suicide.

> All of a sudden a sharp sound of a revolver shot was Heard from the writer's study. In the same instant the others rushed into the study. Khvyl'ovyi sat at his desk, his head thrown back. His dangling arm clutched revolver. The torn fragments of his book Komsolmoltsi (Members of the Young Communist League) were littered around his chair. They were flecked with red blood stains. On the table lay a rectangular piece of white paper, the letter of farewell in which Khvyl'ovyi had written before his death: 'The arrest of Yalovyi (Ukrainian writer and editor) has convinced me that the persecution of Ukrainian writers has begun. Let my blood be proof of Yalovyi's complete innocence.[21]

Khvyl'ovyi's suicide left Kulish in a stupor. Gone was a friend who had bore such a strong influence on his career. V. P. stated: "The conflict between Bolshevism and the Ukrainian village (cf. the story I by Mykola Khvyl'ovyi)

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[21]Ukrainian Publishers Limited, Russian Oppression in the Ukraine (London: Ukrainian Publishers Limited, 1962), p. 99.

became the prevailing theme of all Kulish's plays . . ."[22]

Antonina, Kulish's wife, feared that he also would commit suicide. Kulish replied: "Be calm. I won't do what Khvyl'ovyi has done. I'll find myself the strength and I will fight to the end."[23]

Kulish continued his struggle by writing another play, Maklena Grasa. Feeling that since he had altered the play's Ukrainian themes sufficiently and placed the action of the play in Poland, Kulish along Kurbas decided to stage the play with the Berezil ensemble. The disguise was unsuccessful. The Berezil ensemble was forced to enact the play under armed guard before The Repertoire Committee and the Poliburo of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Communist Party of the Ukraine. Maklena Grasa was banned after five performances because; "the veiled symbolism of the play (the bankruptcy of the Communist stockbrokers and the desperate act of the famine-ridden young girl) was thought inappropriate at the time of widespread famine in the Ukraine during 1933."[24]

Kurbas was removed from his post as artistic director

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[22]Ibid., p. 102.

[23]Iurii Lavrinenko, Rozstriliane Vidrodzhennia (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1959), p. 654. Quotation translated by Gordon Gordey.

[24]George Luckyj, Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine, 1917-34 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 134.

of the Berezil and deprived of the title of People's Artist of the Ukraine. On December 26, 1933 this unseated director of the Berezil was arrested for allegedly belonging to an anti-government association known as The Ukrainian Military Organization. Prior to his arrest, at Kurbas's official denouncement from the Berezil, Kurbas made the following declaration;

> "I know that tomorrow I will not have the opportunity to speak. Here in this crematorium of Ukrainian culture you dare not shut my mouth, for I speak in the name of Ukrainian art which you are destroying." He then went on to reveal in fiery words the entire barbaric policy of the Commissariat towards art, all the destructive methods in the battle against evidences of growth of Ukrainian art.[25]

After months of not agreeing to his membership in the suspect organization, in May, 1934 Kurbas was sent to a labor camp on the Solovki Islands where he perished. It seemed that Khvyl'ovyi's last words were quickly becoming manifest.

Kulish spent the latter part of 1933 in a sanitorium in the Caucasus where he was treating himself because of heart problems. While he was there he wrote a film scenario entitled Paryzhkom [Paris Commune] which was accepted for production. Even though Kulish was granted monetary advances on the scenario, it was never realized. He also wrote three plays entitled; Blind Alley, Such, and Dialogue.

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[25]Yosip Hirniak, "Birth and Death of the Modern Ukrainian Theatre," Soviet Theatres, 1917-1941, ed. by Martha Bradshaw (New York, 1954), pp. 334-335.

June 14, 1934 marked the start of direct action against Kulish. The records of the minutes from a meeting organized for the Purge of the Party Organization of Writers disclosed the declaration signed by Secretary Livshits:

> Mykola Kulish, born in 1892, clerk, Party member. Was not a member of other parties. Has received the following punishment from the Party: 1) a reprimand for unethical behavior in a co-operative settlement; 2) a reprimand for refusal to pay a visit to the country; 3) a reprimand for his passive work in the Party. For his nationalistic deviations which are clearly visible in his historical dramas directed against the ideology of the Party (The People's Malakhii, Myna Mazailo, Blind Alley, Maklena Grasa, and The Sonata Pathetique) as well as for his active support of and close contact with the nationalist counter-revolutionary elements (Kurbas, Yalovy), for his activity as a leader of the Free Academy of Prolitarian Literature (VAPLITE) and The All-Ukrainian Comedy Association in so far as he helped direct the policies of those organizations against the Party, and for his own nationalistic convictions of which there is no doubt,--it has been decided to exclude him from the Party.[26]

Sviatoslav Hordynsky explains Kulish's reasons for punishment as follows:

> The 'unethical behavior' of Kulish consisted in his using the 'zhyd' in a "conversation which was subsequently" reported to the Party. 'Zhyd' is the only word for 'Jew' in the Ukrainian as well as the Polish languages, yet it has an offensive meaning in Russian. Because of this word 'zhyd' was forbidden by the Soviets and the Russian word for 'Jew'--'yevrey' was introduced instead. Curiously the word 'yevrey' in its Russian pronunciation has a slightly offensive meaning in Ukrainian, so the Ukrainians came to use the 'yevrey' in official language and kept the word 'zhyd' in private conversation . . . (point two) in 1933, during the famine in the Ukraine, Kulish refused to engage in a propaganda campaign in the country.[27]

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[26]Sviatoslav Hordynsky, "Ideas on the Scaffold," The Ukrainian Quarterly, V (Fall, 1949), p. 331.

[27]Ibid., p. 331.

Without his Party card and his passport Kulish was a trapped man. On December 7, 1934 Kulish was arrested on a Kharkiv street while he was on his way to the funeral of his playwright friend Ivan Dniprovs'kyi. He had died from tuberculosis in Yalta and Kulish had just a few days before brought the body to Kharkiv for burial. The NKVD agents who arrested Kulish transported him to Kiev where he was forced to confess to nationalist deviations and then transported to the Solovki Islands. Under the hand of Pavel Postyshev, who had been sent to the Ukraine by Moscow to supervise the economic and cultural life of the Ukraine, the Party purge continued to grow to tremendous dimensions. In this same month of Kulish's arrest, seventy-nine authors and scientists were executed by Soviet firing squad. Hundreds of others were exiled, their works removed from all libraries and destroyed, and their names forbidden to be mentioned. Kulish's name itself was obscured until his posthumous rehabilitation in 1956. The Soviet reality had become manifest. Instead of the promised communism and socialism it brought a new system of repression of one human being by another, a system farm more complete, heartless and dreadful, than the old pre-revolutionary system. The plight of Mykola Kulish, plus that of his fellow writers, marked the tragic obliteration of a group of individuals who believed that the freedom of literary creation and expression is a fundamental principle in the building of a nation's culture.

THE PEOPLE'S MALAKHII

by Mikola Kulish

A tragi-comedy in five acts translated by
Gordon Gordey

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MALAKHII STAKANCHYK, a former postman from the village of Yesterday, aged forty-seven.

TARASOVNA STAKANCHYK, his wife.

VIRA STAKANCHYK, their oldest daughter.

NADIA STAKANCHYK, their middle daughter.

LIUBUNIA STAKANCHYK, their youngest daughter.

GODFATHER, christian godfather for the daughters of the Stakanchyks.

FIRST NEIGHBOR, a female friend of Tarasovna's.

SECOND NEIGHBOR, a second female friend of Tarasovna's.

TENOR (MOKII YAKOVITCH), member of the church choir in Yesterday.

BASS, another member of the church choir in Yesterday.

FIRST COMMANDANT, an official of Command Headquarters in Kharkiv.

SECOND COMMANDANT, a second official of the Command Headquarters.

AHAPIA SAVCHYKHA, an old lady on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

OLIA MANOILOVNA, a female orderly at the Saburova Villa asylum.

MADAM APOLINARA, a keeper of a brothel in Kharkiv.

MATILDA, a newly-rich lady is a friend to Madam Apolinara.

RIDING BREECHES, an old soldier.

OLD MAN

OLD BACHELOR.

COURIER, a military messenger.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH, a male orderly at the Saburova Villa asylum.

FIRST PATIENT, insane patient at the Saburova Villa.

SECOND PATIENT, insane patient at the Saburova Villa.

THIRD PATIENT, insane patient at the Saburova Villa.

FOURTH PATIENT, insane patient at the Saburova Villa.

FIFTH PATIENT, insane patient at the Saburova Villa.

SIXTH PATIENT, insane patient at the Saburova Villa.

FIRST WORKER, a foundry worker.

SECOND WORKER, a foundry worker.

THIRD WORKER, a foundry worker.

FOURTH WORKER, a foundry worker.

FIFTH WORKER, a foundry worker.

SIXTH WORKER, a foundry worker.

YOUTH, a newsboy.

NERVOUS VISITOR, a client of Madam Apolinara's.

FIRST VISITOR, a client of Madam Apolinara's.

SECOND VISITOR, a client of Madam Apolinara's.

THIRD VISITOR, a client of Madam Apolinara's.

FIRST GIRL, a prostitute.

MUSIA, a prostitute.

MUSICIAN, a male musician in Madam Apolinara's brothel.

The play is set in 1928. Settings are:

Act I. Malakhii's house on Mishchanskii street in Yesterday.

Act II. Command Headquarters, Kharkiv.

Act. III. The Saburova Villa.

Act IV. The Sickle and Hammer Foundry.

Act V. Madam Apolinara's Brothel.

ACT I

Scene 1[1]

Crying and grieving in her home on #37 Mishchanskii Street is Madam Statanchykha

TARASOVNA

TARASOVNA

Oi,[2] who will say? Who is to tell me? Is it going to be you little bird? Or is it you, Mother of God? Where is he going? Into what parts is he running away? For whom does he throw me aside, wretched soul?

(The canary is dejected in it's cage. Sorrowful is the icon of the Mother of God. They are silent. NADIA falls beside TARASOVNA).

NADIA

Mama!

TARASOVNA

Don't interrupt!

NADIA

Drink, beloved.

TARASOVNA

What is this?

NADIA

Valerian drops.[3]

TARASOVNA

Away! Let me go! Is it possible for such a drama in the heart to be restrained with Valerian drops? Give me poison!

NADIA
People are walking by the window.

TARASOVNA
Give me ground glass, I'll poison myself!

NADIA
The neighbors . . . they can see and hear.

TARASOVNA
Let them see! Let them hear! If they are friends let them be pitiful. If enemies let them be joyful that there is such a drama in our home. That my lawful husband is running away!

Scene 2

Enter the VIRA. Nadia speaks to her.

NADIA

Have you called Godfather?[4]

VIRA

Coming.

TARASOVNA

(TARASOVNA throws herself at them).

Where is he? Far?

VIRA

Right away he'll walk in.

TARASOVNA

Where is he I ask?

VIRA

But I'm telling you mama,--right away . . . He had to stop into a certain place because, he got sick to his stomach.

TARASOVNA

(TARASOVNA wipes herself).

Oh God, that is what you should have said in the beginning. Is everything in order there?

VIRA

I washed yesterday.

NADIA

(NADIA turns to VIRA).

Did you tell Godfather that papon'ka[5] has already run for a passport?

VIRA

What do you suppose?

NADIA

And he? What?

VIRA

Said that he already knows about this.

TARASOVNA

And the basses from the church, you've called them?

VIRA

Liubunia has run.

TARASOVNA

And whiskey for the basses?

VIRA

She will also buy the whiskey.

TARASOVNA

Go, my daughter, and cut some onions into small pieces and some radishes, grease them with oil; for a little snack for the people.

VIRA

(VIRA bursts out).

Always me, and me! And for Godfather, and for the basses, and cut up the onions. And she stands there, hands folded.

NADIA

And who watered the flowers, if not me? And who fetched the Valerian drops? Are your eyes so far out of your head that you can't see?

(They pinch one another so the mother

doesn't see).

VIRA

Oi!

NADIA

Oi-oi!

TARASOVNA

Oi, I'll die and then die again with such daughters. It is already dark in my eyes, and the sun has become black, and they are still adding to this burning. Give me the cards! One more time I'll cast his . . . one more time and that's all.

(Casts the cards. Looks. Clutches her heart).

Oi. once again a journey is taking shape!

VIRA[6]

Are you serious? Serious, beloved mother?

NADIA

Have your eyes come out again? The red six?

(There in TARASOVNA'S eyes is a deep terror, mystic-like).

TARASOVNA

Prophesize, prophesize, and always this card. And also a dream: a road in a field and a moon in its third phase that is already sad, and also pale. As if it were escaping, rolled away behind the earth. And I stand near the road, like a shadow, all alone. It is our father, that moon, my soul feels . . . he'll run away, roll away, die on the journey.

VIRA

Mama, quiet yourself!

NADIA

The neighbors are coming.

TARASOVNA

It is impossible to keep quiet, because I've already kept quiet enough! And enough hiding! Let everyone know, what kind of drama there is in the home and the heart.

Scene 3

The neighbors enter, quietly and gravely, in a way that agrees with walking into such an event. They stop. The daughters now behave like swallows to their mother.

VIRA

Dear mama, maybe you need a compress put on?

NADIA

Maybe, dear mama, you will lie down and rest?

(The neighbors sigh. They motion with heads. And in a manner which agrees with such an event they speak philosophically).

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Perhaps one day we'll rest in a villa on a commune. In a cemetary.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

There indeed we'll sleep to our hearts content.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Greeting, Tarasovna!

TARASOVNA

(With difficulty and great effort she lifts herself up. Greets them).

Sit down, dear neighbors. Even though there is a drama in the home, please sit.

(Gives NADIA the handkerchief).

Give me another handkerchief!

NADIA

Soaking, like a downpour! Is it possible to cry like that, mama?

(The NEIGHBORS in regard to such a question, smile and then quietly speak).

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Hmmn . . . and why not?

SECOND NEIGHBOR

She's asking.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

It is said . . . young, green . . .

TARASOVNA

It's not myself that I pity; but them, my children. Neither sleeps. Mama, she says, I can't. The other doesn't sleep. Cries into her pillow silently. The third, Liubunia as if a ghost, stands beside me the entire night. And the father, unconcerned, he's running away.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Is not Malakhii Mynovitch, to say, already late in years, to undertake such an affair? It truly doesn't seem true.

TARASOVNA

He's already gotten everything for the road. Here: his staff, his bag of biscuits.

VIRA

He dried them himself.

TARASOVNA

Dried them in secret. Now he's run to the Soviet executive to get a passport, today he's running away.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

But where to, even though it is not proper to ask such a question, but where to, Tarasovna?

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Don't ask!

VIRA

He doesn't say.

TARASOVNA

He doesn't say, dear neighbors. Even Godfather has asked. I even gave a special litany. Even tried to get him drunk. He doesn't say.

(The NEIGHBORS are in an even greater wonderment).

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Hmmn . . . It's truly . . . a staff. And a bag. This seems as if he is going on a pilgrimage. And maybe he has prepared to fast to some icon or something?

TARASOVNA

How can he go to the icons when he surprised me by forbidding me to bake Easter bread.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

What are you saying?

TARASOVNA

To the pigs. Easter eggs, I dyed enough, but he threw them to the pigs too. Seven years like this. In the house there is not a bit of happiness, no peace of mind, the end of the seventh year is drawing near, and on top of this he is running away from home.

(She begins to weep loudly).

VIRA and NADIA

Oi, oi, little mother, oi!

FIRST NEIGHBOR

What is it with you, Tarasovna? Come to your senses! As if for the dead. Can it be possible?

TARASOVNA

Dearest neighbors, I can't come to understand it. It would be better for him to die. That I could send him to the other world than if he is to run away like this and to where I don't know. Because at least to the deceased you can go and get advice. There, you can lean on the cross and cry out your sorrows, but if he runs away where can I go? Where can I look for him? Over what worlds, over which roads? Neither dead or alive can I see him.

(The NEIGHBORS are moved by this. They blow their noses in their kerchiefs and their aprons).

SECOND NEIGHBOR
Such drama, such drama. You don't even need the cinema.

(They speak after a pause).

At least tell us, when this happened to him, from what, and how?

(VIRA and NADIA pour it out).

NADIA
From the time when the soldiers burned our fence.

VIRA
Not true! When the shell hit the hay pile.

NADIA
I'll tell it!

VIRA
I will!

(TARASOVNA stops her daughters).

TARASOVNA
About a husband, no one can tell it better than his lawful wife. Only I, dearly, dearly, dear neighbors . . . but quickly because today is a working day. Yet at the start of the revolution. When it started, when it started--

NADIA
The soldiers--

VIRA
Don't interrupt, little idiot!

NADIA
--burned our fence.

SECOND NEIGHBOR
At our place during that time, the pigs were killed by the Macedonians.[7]

(TARASOVNA and her daughters alternate).

TARASOVNA
From that time it started, dear neighbors. First of all Malasyk drank water secretly--

NADIA
Papon'ka's were even chattering--

TARASOVNA
Don't interrupt, because only I saw it. Three daughters, three fullgrown girls, and no one but myself, saw how he drank water, my Malasyk, and how his teeth chattered.

VIRA
And mine chattered, mama.

TARASOVNA
You're lying! You slept through the revolution. It was Liubunia, poor thing, who set her teeth so she wouldn't cry from the revolution.

VIRA
We all set our teeth.

TARASOVNA
Quiet! In the night, before the world, when the revolution was already settling into a deep sleep, we huddled together and cried, and cried, and cried.

(The NEIGHBORS become perturbed).

FIRST NEIGHBOR
The revolution struck and she struck everyone completely!

(TARASOVNA speaks as if throwing in peas).[8]

TARASOVNA
And me the hardest. And for what? What for?

VIRA
That time when--

NADIA
Don't interrupt!

VIRA
--the chief of the post office was killed.

TARASOVNA
Quiet! The time when the post office chief was killed, Malasyk began to shake, began to shiver, and then walled himself up in the closet.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Ha? What?

NADIA

Papon'ka--

VIRA

walled himself in --

NADIA

--and plastered the doors shut.

TARASOVNA

Two years he's stayed there.

(The NEIGHBORS rise to their feet).

SECOND NEIGHBOR

What are you saying?

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Two years in a closet!

TARASOVNA

Just think, what a hardship it was to keep it a secret. I kept quiet, and they kept quiet, as if our mouths were filled with water.

(The NEIGHBORS cast glances at each other).

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Then it comes out that Malakhi Mynovitch never did journey to his brothers village like you said.

TARASOVNA

No, No. Now it is in the open, dear neighbors. Now I'll tell the whole truth.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

And he never served there?

TARASOVNA

No, and again, no! Only God knew that Malakhii was sitting walled up; only God, and then me, and then my daughters, and then Godfather.

(The NEIGHBORS become annoyed that they hadn't found about this).

FIRST NEIGHBOR
Well, who would believe this! Here is a drama. We felt it in the night. But where did he, pardon my words, go for air?

NADIA
Through the window.

TARASOVNA
Tsst! Through a secret window, into a small pot.

SECOND NEIGHBOR
Into the one which is all peeled?

TARASOVNA
That same one. I was still carrying Liuba when I bought it.

(The NEIGHBORS speak together).

SECOND NEIGHBOR
Hmm. Every morning, you look--

FIRST NEIGHBOR
--the pot is on the fence. But you would not realize that Malakhii Mynovytch is sitting walled up--

SECOND NEIGHBOR
--in the closet.

TARASOVNA
When NSEP[9] finally came in. You remember, neighbors, Godfather was allowed to trade in icons.

FIRST NEIGHBOR
And why not? We were the first of anyone to buy incense after the revolution.

NADIA
It was then that papon'ka took the wall down.

TARASOVNA
Tsst! It would have been better if he had stayed walled up forever, because now, after having read all those Bolshevik books he's running away from home.

Scene 4

LIUBUNIA

LIUBUNIA, the youngest daughter runs in. Laying down her basket, she puts her hand to her heart.

LIUBUNIA

Here you are crying. Here you are feeling mournful and you don't realize that papon'ka has already left the Executive Committee's office.

(TARASOVNA yelps).

He kissed me, he himself is happy and joyful.

TARASOVNA

Has he gotten a passport?

LIUBUNIA

I don't know. He went to the head of the militia. And I hurried to the church, mama. I fell on my knees, and prayed. God; I said, God, don't give me luck and good fortune, only make it so papon'ka stays home. I kissed the floor.

(She demonstrated what she did).

Was what I did good, mama?

TARASOVNA

Fine, my daughter. And the basses? The basses?

LIUBUNIA

Coming right away.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Have you hired a litany, or what?

LIUBUNIA

No, Godfather said to call a bass and a tenor from the choir, to stop papon'ka with songs. Oi, I forgot! Mama! Moki Yakovitch said papon'ka doesn't like A Mercy of Peace, but "Why have you forsaken me" . . . [10]

(TARASOVNA becomes restless).

TARASOVNA
Godfather must know this immediately.

(She speaks to VIRA).

Run and call for them.

VIRA
How can I call for them when they're already here!

Scene 5

VIRA bites her tongue to keep silent, because with dignity GODFATHER has entered. GODFATHER is exhausted. TARASOVNA addresses him as if she were speaking to God.

TARASOVNA

Can it take so long when there is such grief, such grief, Godfather!

(GODFATHER doesn't drop his hands from his stomach).

GODFATHER

Calmly! I'd fly here on wings my friend, but listen.

(After a pause when all are listening, he continues).

Do you hear it's gurgling? Whew! Yes, you say he's running away?

TARASOVNA

He already left the Executive Committee office.

(GODFATHER speaks with authority).

GODFATHER

I know.

LIUBUNIA

He kissed me, he himself is happy and joyful.

(GODFATHER speaks with more authority).

GODFATHER

About this I also know.

TARASOVNA
He went to present himself to the head of the militia.

(GODFATHER becomes invincibly authoritive).

GODFATHER
And this to me is no secret.

TARASOVNA
Then why, Godfather, is it such a drama for me? What for?

(GODFATHER in deep thought points upward).

GODFATHER
Only He knows.

(The NEIGHBORS put in their word).

SECOND NEIGHBOR
Yes, true, true. Only He knows, about everything.

(GODFATHER sees the NEIGHBORS).

GODFATHER
Good health to you!

NEIGHBORS
And greetings to you!

GODFATHER
There are the burdens we undergo. Our dear friend is running away from us. And where to? Even his very mother doesn't know.

TARASOVNA
The cards are of one mind . . . a journey.

GODFATHER
I even know about that, and I say: let the journey lead to his grave, but not--to there.

TARASOVNA
Oh God, where to?

NADIA
Where to, Godfather?

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Where?

(GODFATHER goes to the cage. Sorrowfully he shakes his head).

GODFATHER

How are you little bird? Sad? Are you grieving too, that your landlord is going away?

(GODFATHER turns to the NEIGHBORS).

No wonder it's said in the song: the little canary so sadly sings.

(He then becomes overdramatic and speaks).

Listen my dear friend, and you my godchildren, and you dear neighbors! This is what I have found out. It is not within the Executive Commitee's power to forbid our dear friend from running away.

(TARASOVNA shakes once. Then she speaks to GODFATHER and to everyone).

TARASOVNA

Its ringing . . . in my ears . . . so shrilly its ringing . . .

(GODFATHER notices that LIUBUNIA has a strange look, she isn't moving. He speaks to her).

GODFATHER

Are you still holding on, godchild?

LIUBUNIA

During the revolution Godfather, everyone drank water with chattering teeth. Only I stood like this, and through the whole revolution I stood as if in the Passion of Jesus. Only here

(She points to her jaws).

it hurt. And now it hurts here

(She points to her jaws).

and it hurts here

(She puts her hands to her heart).

and in my knees it hurts. It hurts.

GODFATHER

Even the head of the militia told me, ehe![11] there isn't a law in the Soviet power that forbids running away from home, all the more, for one as old as our dear friend.

TARASOVNA

Godfather! What are we going to do now?

VIRA

Godfather, advise us!

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Such a drama! Such a drama!

GODFATHER

Calmly! Now you've understood fully from where comes the stomach, the nerves, and everything in the world . . . through the godfather! Have you called the basses?

LIUBUNIA

Right away, they said.

GODFATHER

Listen, once again! Calmly. That is, no crying, Moreover don't faint and fall, until I tell you. This is one.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Listen to him! Listen to him!

GODFATHER

Bring the canary here! Closer to the table! Like that. Light the incense burner!

TARASOVNA

He'll break it Godfather.

NADIA

Papon'ka doesn't believe in incense burners anymore.

GODFATHER

And I say light it! Is there any incense?

TARASOVNA

There is. Get it from there, dearest. There on the icon shelf.

GODFATHER

Put it in, so it will strike at his nerves. What a drama, that today he is against religion. Twenty-seven years a person liked canaries and the smell of incense, found love in church songs . . . and that this should all pass by without a reward for him. This is two!

(The NEIGHBORS shake and then nod their heads).

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Ah, yes, yes!

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Of course, yes!

GODFATHER

Now this; which chicken did my friend love best?

TARASOVNA

The yellowish one with the golden comb.

GODFATHER

Kill the yellow one!

TARASOVNA

Godfather, what are you saying? Such a chicken!

GODFATHER

Kill it, I say! Let one of the girls run. Well, you, Liubunia! No, you will be playing on the harmonium. You, Vira. Come running with the chicken and shout that your neighbor, Tukhlia, killed the chicken. With a stick across the head.

TARASOVNA

This chicken . . . she has no price Godfather.

GODFATHER

Right here she has! Kill it with a sharp stick, so the eye will jump out. So he will become very angry. Maybe if God grants it, he will summon a court about the chicken, like before the war when he accused another for three years about a young rooster.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Ah, it's true. This is a wise method . . . one of you run.

TARASOVNA

Run, Vira!

(Everybody speaks together to Vira. And she talks to herself).

VIRA

Run! Run!

(VIRA runs out).

GODFATHER

This . . . is only three. Four. Calmly! As I was walking here I looked at nature . . . and do you know what I beheld?

(He continues after a pause).

I beheld that even nature isn't the same as she was under the old regime.

(Again after a pause).

And why is this? It is because the communists have ruined even nature! Thus with these kind of questions I'll confuse my dear friend. He won't run away. Not long ago in the culturâl centre an important speaker stepped forth. I went at him with questions in the same way . . . as if with stones. Here are the basses.

Scene 6

Barely through the door before everyone is giving the singers from the choir directions. The TENOR, one who stammers, speaks.

TENOR
I-I-I-I hear-hear-heard that--

(The BASS redeems the TENOR and picks it up).

BASS
--Malakhii Mynovytch is running away.

GODFATHER
It wouldn't be so difficult if even of his own will he died today! Just think forty-seven years. A family, honor upon honor. And then here you are . . . he's running away.

(The TENOR and BASS begin to wonder).

TENOR
A-And wh-wh-where--

BASS
--where of interest is he running to?

GODFATHER
I'm going, says my dear friend. Where I ask? I'll reveal it in a mission.

TENOR
Wo-wo-wo--

BASS
--Wonderful!

GODFATHER
It hurt. It gave me a sharp pain in my heart as if he had struck it with nettles. All our lives we were friends. It can be said that we slept in each others hearts. And now here you are, he's running away. And now here you are further, he's running away . . . today!

TENOR

Is it not much better for his case: I-i-i-in . . .

(He starts to sing).

"In one moment thou didst grant paradise unto the wise thief . . . "

GODFATHER

No! No! only Dekhtiar'ova's[12], A Mercy of Peace. He favored A Mercy of Peace most of all. When we were fishing and he would be singing A Mercy of Peace quietly to himself he would say, "When I hear this song I feel faint and see a vision of the devine".

Scene 7

VIRA is at the door.

VIRA

Papon'ka! Papon'ka is coming!

(All become alarmed. Everyone begins to move).

TARASOVNA

Is he far away?

VIRA

Approaching the yard.

TARASOVNA

Godfather! What now?

BASS

Maybe we should start?

TENOR

Do-sol-mi-do!

(Everyone has turned towards Godfather. He moves his hand as if it were a mace).

GODFATHER

Calmly! I'll give the sign when . . . Kill the chicken! Bring in the incense burner!

Scene 8

MALAKHII enters. Stands at the doorstep. Stillness. Only the rustling of the eyes can be heard.

GODFATHER
Why have you stopped at the doorstep, my friend? Unless you don't recognize us? It's your friends who have gathered, having heard that today you're running away.

(His eyes dreamlike, MALAKHII steps from the doorstep).

MALAKHII
I'm not running away . . . I'm going.

GODFATHER
It's all one . . . you're running away.

MALAKHII
Oi, how we don't comprehend. Even don't see what rights the revolution has given to the individual! Obviously the eyes have to be revived so they can see them.

GODFATHER
What is this leading to, even though I already know?

MALAKHII
He wanted to forbid me to go on a journey. And he is the head of the militia? He, like you my friend, doesn't comprehend that the right for this great journey was given to me by the revolution.

GODFATHER
Then does this mean you're going?

MALAKHII
I'm going my friend! Going, my friends!

GODFATHER
Where to?

MALAKHII

Where to? Into the sky-blue distance.[13]

(The NEIGHBORS whisper like reeds from the wind . . . sh-sh-sh).

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Where to did he say?

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Where?

FIRST NEIGHBOR

How?

(GODFATHER stares intently at MALALHII).

GODFATHER

No joking! Tell us where to?

TARASOVNA

These people have come to see you off, at least tell them where to?

(MALAKHII'S eyes are overlowingly dream-like).

MALAKHII

Akh Godfather, and you my friends! If you could only know . . . it's as if I hear music and truly see the sky-blue distance. What rapture! I'm going! By the way, extinguish the incense burner.

GODFATHER

Can this be possible? The incense burner is to stand in the path of your running away!

MALAKHII

Not for me, but for you! For you to run away from the bondage of religion. Extinguish it! Soon the moon will be of no use . . . electricity! And you with an incense burner.

GODFATHER

A question!

MALAKHII

It also smells with incense . . . how could you burn incense? Open the window!

(TARASOVNA begins to move but GODFATHER stops her with a glance. Seeing this, MALAKHII opens the window himself and extinguishes the incense burner).

GODFATHER

Calmly! I have a question.

MALAKHII

If you please.

GODFATHER

Only calmly! My friend, are you for socialism?

MALAKHII

Yes.

GODFATHER

And even for the co-operative?

MALAKHII

And are you for the incense burner?

GODFATHER

Calmly! It is I who am asking, so I beg you, answer.

MALAKHII

If you please, ask away.

GODFATHER

How can you be for socialism, all the more for the co-operative, when she is false to the very last button.

MALAKHII

For example?

GODFATHER

Calmly! Why was it when I got socialist material at the co-operative store and had not worn it for one month before it faded and came apart? And this is a fact, as in a twain there are two.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Ah true! Get some blue cloth for a kerchief or a flag suddenly, it's all faded to white!

(MALAKHII laughs lightly).

MALAKHII

Go on.

GODFATHER

Why was it when my wife bought a Soviet comb, designed from the finest quality . . . if she had used it herself, but . . .

(Turns to everyone as to courtroom witnesses).

Ninon'ka, an innocent child, hair like flax . . .

(Everyone moves their heads . . . "We know").

Then I ask why on the first time did three teeth fall out? And this is a fact!

MALAKHII

Three teeth. Go on.

GODFATHER

Why is the thread rotten and why do the stockings tear on the third day? Why is it not clean in the steam-bath as before? And why can't you get a doctor even if you died three times?

MALAKHII

Stockings and the steam-bath. Go on.

(GODFATHER speaks in a clamoring voice, like a tribune).

GODFATHER

And why is it that for three years there has been no spring, but always some sort of confusion in nature? It's cold . . . even the snow goes quickly . . . slap, bang, as in the steam-bath on the highest shelf. And is this not a fact, tell me?

TENOR

Fact!

BASS

Fact!

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Ah, fact!

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Of course, fact!

MALAKHII

Is this all?

GODFATHER

Let it be everything, even though I have a million questions.

(MALAKHII looks with his eyes over-

flowing).

MALAKHII

Tell me why I, why you, my friend, why all of us were frightened to think before the revolution? And now I think about everything . . . about everything?

(GODFATHER walks toward the canary).

GODFATHER

Go on!

MALAKHII

Tell me why I was frightened of dreaming? Even to have a desire to take a bag and a staff and to go . . . go, in that way, into the far off. I chased away those kind of dreams, and now . . . freely, I take my staff in hand, my biscuits in my bag, and I'm going.

(GODFATHER speaks tauntingly).

GODFATHER

Running away. Go on.

MALAKHII

Tell me why I trembled from authority, from the liturgy . . . at home walked around on tiptoe.

(MALAKHII walks on tiptoe).

Like this! Like this! Gave flies the road . . . and now . . .

(MALAKHII glances at everyone in wonder-

ment).

I write letters to the councillors of the Ukraine and get an answer.

(MALAKHII pulls out a letter . . .

ceremoniously raises his voice).

Please stand!

(MALAKHII reads).

"Ukrainian S.S.R., Administrative Council of the People's Commissariat, Kharkiv, date, number. In regard to you questions, the bureau A.C.P.C.[14] informs you, that your projects and letters, have been received and turned over to the People's Commissariat for Enlightement and the People's Commissariat in Defense of Health". What rapture! The A.C.P.C. of the Ukraine, Olympus of proletarian wisdom and strength is informing me a one time postman, that my projects have been received.

(MALAKHII speaks in a slightly grand

manner).

My projects! Oh, where am I going to? And for all your questions my friend, there is an answer in my projects. When they are looked over and approved, then you my friend, and a all of you . . . all will receive the answers immediately. Immediately I say . . . and right now I'm leaving. Liubunia! Give me a shirt and my drawers for the road!

GODFATHER

My friend! Don't go!

MALAKHII

Is it possible you have not understood? The projects have been given for the first examination. It is imperative that I hurry. I'm afraid that the commissar won't understand some things in the projects and explanations will be necessary. My shirt and drawers . . .

(MALAKHII walks into another room.

Everyone is suddenly quiet. Then they

whisper as if their lips were numb).

TARASOVNA

Mother of God! Help! I beg you, save him! I beg you, don't let him go!

GODFATHER

Calmly! He has revealed himself. That's how it is! So all year he was writing something in the night . . . and he borrowed from me the stamps.

(LIUBUNIA grabs hold of TARASOVNA).

LIUBUNIA

Oi, mama! It's terrible! Today in church, while praying . . . I sensed . . . as if a cold breath passed over me. I looked . . . and in God's eyes was the sorrow and shadow of doom . . . the shadow of doom.

TARASOVNA

The heart revealed itself! I also sense he is going on death's journey.

GODFATHER

Calmly! He is presenting himself to the A.C.E.C.[15] and the A.C.P.C.! Already pride has struck him in the head. As if we are ignorant and are slaves. This is our dear friend. No! I won't let him go! It won't be like me, I swear to God, if I don't turn him back again! I'll turn him back from the road. I myself will make my way to the A.C.E.C. Hear this. When he walks out I'll give the speech and you Mokii Yakovitch start A Mercy of Peace.

(The TENOR throws himself into the song).

TENOR

Do-do, so, me, do-do. Liube Malakhiievna! Nadia! Begin on the harmonium!

(GODFATHER, again moves his hand as if with a mace).

GODFATHER

Calmly! Not right now, I say. Here is the order: first I'll give the speech, next the canary, then A Mercy of Peace, then the tears and the chicken. Only don't get confused. I'll give the signal.

(Everyone repeats the order, whispering it to themselves).

ALL

The speech, the canary, Mercy of Peace, the tears and the chicken.

Scene 9

Enter MALAKHII ready for the journey. GODFATHER blocks his path.

GODFATHER

You are truly going my friend?

MALAKHII

Going, my friend.

(GODFATHER glances at everyone. Quietly).

The speech.

(GODFATHER speaks in a loud voice).

Listen Malakhii, and not only you, but everyone who is present in this home. We thought that you would commit all your sound lifetime to us. And then die on our hands, on the hands of your friends. And we would walk behind your coffin singing, "Holy God immortal have mercy upon us".[16] Give me some water!

(He drinks and then breathes heavily).

Calmly! We thought I'd say this speech over your coffin, or you over mine . . . because it's the same. But it didn't turn out that way. You haven't chosen that journey for yourself, and you've betrayed your religion, the law, your wife and children, and your friends. And above all, where are you going? Junt think! Drink some water Tarasovna.

(TARASOVNA drinks some water. Then she speaks in a barely audible voice).

TARASOVNA

I won't be able to live out my life alone. I'll die Malasyko.

(Someone else wants a drink of water, but GODFATHER glances at him sternly. GODFATHER puts the top on the water bottle).

GODFATHER

I don't believe it. I don't believe that you would go on such a dark journey, because who if not you, was a most believing christian . . . sang in the choir for twenty-seven years and knew the holy scriptures to the letter. Don't go. You will be invited by the church congregation to become its president. And this is a fact.

BASS, TENOR, THE NEIGHBORS

Yes it's a fact, because the meeting is on Sunday!

GODFATHER

If you're going then look about you. See how sorrowful your wife is and how your daughters have bent like willows over a pond in the steppe . . . look at the canary, even it is melancholy.

(MALAKHII walks up to the cage. Everyone holds their breathe. MALAKHII takes down the cage).

MALAKHII

This is how I sat. Like this in a cage . . . my life's best years.

(MALAKHII goes to the window and frees the bird).

And you fly little bird . . . into the sky-blue distance.

(MALAKHII turning to everyone).

Farewell!

(GODFATHER gives a signal to the TENOR, and then addresses MALAKHII).

GODFATHER

Don't go my friend, because you'll perish!

MALAKHII

For the sake of what my friend?

MALAKHII

For the sake of a higher aim!

(LIUBUNIA plays on the harmonium. The TENOR moves his arms as if they were wings and A Mercy of Peace begins to reverberate. MALAKHII stops and wants to say something, but the BASS won't let him. The BASS covers all the voices and the harmonium to the point that all the veins in his neck swell. He sings. MALAKHII painfully smiles at GODFATHER).

MALAKHII

Here I've swept the webs of religion from my soul and yet I don't know why this singing so oddly disturbs me?

(The choir of the BASS and the TENOR go on singing. "It is worthy and right to worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, one in essence and indivisible").

MALAKHII

As a young boy I remember when this was sung on the Whitsuntide.[17] It seemed to me as if God had come down to earth just for our village . . . walking in our small field and spreading incense. A kind of grey-haired old man in white clothing and his eyes . . . sad. He spreads incense on the rye, on the flowers, on all Ukraine . . . .

(MALAKHII speaks to his neighbors and to GODFATHER).

Listen the censer is ringing and the larks sing.

GODFATHER

On Sunday my friend, in church, we'll sing A Mercy of Peace like this. Stay with us.

(GODFATHER takes MALAKHII by the hand,

and prepares to remove his bag.

MALAKHII quickly regains his senses).

MALAKHII

Let me go! Away with this poisonous singing. Cease it!

(GODFATHER motions with his hand).

GODFATHER

Sing!

MALAKHII

A-ah, it is with a purpose that the choir was summoned. So that I would be poisoned again with this singing and the incense. It won't work out for you to do this! Because look . . . walking up to the old God is someone in red . . . face unseen and throwing a grenade.

(Choir sings: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of

heavenly Hosts; heaven and earth are full

of thy glory").

Do you hear the thunder? Fire and thunder on the flower laden steppes of the Ukraine. It's crumbling . . . look the heavens are blown apart and falling . . . there . . . the heads of forty martyr's pointing downwards . . . Jesus and Mohammed, Adam and the Apocalypse are flying on all fours . . . and the constellations, Cancer and Capricorn in down and dust.

(MALAKHII sings with all his strength).

Be healthy and fortunate my little old ones.

(TARASOVNA burst out crying).

TARASOVNA

Don't go Malasyko[18] because I'll die right here! She will come . . . she will come, grief . . . hunchbacked . . . and sit on my head in the night . . . she will dry it out and choke it.

Scene 10

Quickly breaking into the scene is VIRA with the slaughtered chicken.

VIRA
Mama! Papon'ka! Our chicken's been killed!

(Stillness hangs over the scene).

GODFATHER
Which one?

VIRA
The yellowish one, with the golden comb.

(MALAKHII takes the chicken and looks around at the people).

MALAKHII
Who killed it?

VIRA
Tukhlia Vasyl Ivanovitch. With a stick; right on the head!

(GODFATHER turns to MALAKHII).

GODFATHER
What my friend. You haven't even left your yard and already your enemies have reared up. If I were you I wouldn't ever forgive Tukhlia for this. I'd immediately go for the militia and then, to trial.

SECOND NEIGHBOR
Ah yes, a trial is necessary.

TARASOVNA
This is gold, not a chicken. Remember Malasyko how as a chick you fed her with millet gruel. She would eat and then jump on your shoulder . . . flap, flap, flap.

(GODFATHER notices that MALAKHII is becoming pensive).

GODFATHER

Summon the militia! I'll be a witness! Dear people, look what inhumanity. Killing a not yet full grown chicken, and for what?

MALAKHII

Yes, this is inhuman.

GODFATHER

Then summon the militia. Write out an official report.

MALAKHII

No, it's not needed. Official reports will not destroy the wrong and build socialism. Once again this crime convinces me that I must urgently hurry to the Administrative Councillor's in order to hurry up the approval of my projects. Because most important now is the reform of the individual and it is exactly for this that I put together my projects. I'm going!

(GODFATHER is showing signs of losing).

GODFATHER

Don't go my friend. Remember when, as children we ate colored Easter eggs during Good Friday.

(MALAKHII pulls his cap onto his head).

Don't go because I'll strike you!

(LIUBUNIA falls on her knees in front of

MALAKHII and pleads only with her eyes).

MALAKHII

You've excited me, moved me . . . but I cannot dear daughter . . . I cannot Godfather . . . remain here, because the revolution has excited and shaken me a hundred times greater.

Scene 11

TARASOVNA, in the meantime, has brought some sweet Easter bread from the Kitchen

TARASOVNA

Malasyko! Look I baked your favorite bread. Don't go Malasyko! It turned out so puffed, so fragrant . . . and here, look, a star . . . five cornered . . . from raisins.

(MALAKHII makes the move to go three times and then finally leaves. He walks as if against some force, as if tearing his feet out of mud. On the other side of the threshold his step becomes lighter. The Easter bread falls with the bowl. TARASOVNA's knees give under and she falls beside the broken bowl).

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Even the bowl broke.

TARASOVNA

Not the bowl my neighbors . . . this is my life which has broken.

(TARASOVNA cries heavily. VIRA and NADIA feel faint. LIUBUNIA stands like a stone statue. GODFATHER opens the doors and looks at MALAKHII's tracks. And like rustling reeds in the evening the two neighbors whisper).

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Here is a drama.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Here you can cry yourself out plenty.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT II

Scene 1

Telephones are ringing at the A.C.P.C. of the Ukrainian S.S.R. It is the Commandants complaining on the telephone about MALAKHII STAKANCHYK making trouble for them.

FIRST COMMANDANT

Red secretary A.C.P.C.? Command headquarters ringing. Begging a directive Comrade as to what to do with Malakhii Stakanchyk? With that madman that writes projects. Third week, he comes day in and day out. If it was alone, but he's taken to leading others. Who? Well for example someone has had a fight with his wife, he leads him in. Someone has abused someone, he has them both pulled in. A drunk urinates somewhere in a lane and he requests him to come in. He demands urgent reforms for them. I am listening. Yes. Yes. Yes. And if he doesn't listen, what then?

(He puts down the earpiece of the telephone).

This is a directive!

SECOND COMMANDANT

What did he say?

FIRST COMMANDANT

Tactfully and carefully he says, advise the old man to return home. It's been written to the D.E.C.[19] that he be given a post! Even the holy incense won't make an old lady sound when she's mad and runs around!

SECOND COMMANDANT

Do you think he's a madman?

FIRST COMMANDANT

If he isn't a madman then you and I are madmen. It can't be any other way.

SECOND COMMANDANT

Ah, he's plainly a crank!

FIRST COMMANDANT

And his projects?

SECOND COMMANDANT

Enough madness in them. I heard that they say at the A.C.P.C., it's plain that the man has mixed the peas with the cabbage, the oil with the flies, stirred the bible together with Marx, the Acathistus[20] with the Anti-During.[21]

FIRST COMMANDANT

Well if it's that plain, please tactfully and carefully advise him to return home. This is him coming now.

SECOND COMMANDANT

Alone?

FIRST COMMANDANT

Plainly, not alone. Right away he'll mix the oil with the flies for you, and you must eat it all tactfully and carefully.

(MALAKHII's voice is heard off-stage).

MALAKHII

Oh people, people!

(The FIRST COMMANDANT grabs himself by the head).

FIRST COMMANDANT

Do you hear? It's starting!

Scene 2

Enter MALAKHII, staff in hand. Behind him are the lost ones, frightened and trying to force their way through into Command Headquarters. There is a useless Old MAN. AHAPIA, who is a religious pilgrim and carries an umbrella. RIDING BRITCHES, who was a farmer soldier. An older lady, MADAM APOLINARA, who wears a straw hat with a quivering red feather. MATILDA, who is a heavily made up newly-rich. A pale girl called OLIA. Also with the group is an OLD BACHELOR. MALAKHII lets them pass into Command Headquarters.

MALAKHII

Oh people, people, said Taras.[22]

(MALAKHII turns to the COMMANDANTS).

And this happens in a capital city. I'll give you more information.

(The SECOND COMMANDANT speaks in a more humble tone of voice than MALAKHII).

SECOND COMMANDANT

What has happened? Tell me.

MALAKHII

What has happened? But first, pass on a greeting from me to the proletarian Olympus. More to the point, to the Administrative Councillors and the Chairman. Respectful fathers of our class, I am awaiting for the approval of my projects. It's already the third week. I greet you on the day of my angel.[23] With what will you comfort me on this aforementioned holy name day? I ask, with what, because the shadow of Ukrainian grief has fallen on my back: the moon has perished, the wheat has burned, the landlady has driven us out of the lodgings.

(Everyone clamors at the same time).

--The wheat?
--What kind of land-lady?
--What has this to do with us?
--Why us?

(Someone interrupts).

--For what purpose were we--

(Two persons speak together).

--brought here?

MALAKHII

Do you think I've only unravelled . . . untied a few problems and questions? For example, problems, these are the seals with which are glued shut the doors of the future. 1) Towards the urgent reform of the individual, and in the first course of the Ukrainian race, because in the state of our uncles and translators we will have to pasture rabbits on th the other world. 2) Towards the reform of the Ukrainian language from the point of view of the fullest possible socialism. Not like at the telegraph office where for one word; "night-time". 3) In addition, a scheme for rebuilding the Ukraine with it's centre at Kiev, because Kharkiv, it seems to me, is for bureaus. Fathers of our class! Once again I remind you to hurry with my projects and, above all, the projects for the urgent reform of the individual. It is clear they are to be brought into effect with urgency. Look at them.

(Points with his finger towards those whom he has led in).

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven! Yesterday there were five, the day before, three.

(FIRST COMMANDANT addresses everybody).

FIRST COMMANDANT

What has happened? For what has he led you here?

(Again there arises a noisy clamoring).

OLD BACHELOR

We don't know ourselves.

OLD MAN

We were standing next to the church gossiping about this and that, and suddenly . . . .

(The OLD MAN becomes fidgety).

MADAM APOLINARA

Pardon! This girl felt faint in church so I jumped to her side and led her into the fresh air. You yourself know how on Trinity Sunday[24] the church air is delicate: the birches, the grass, the flowers.

(MADAM APOLINARA, who is wearing straw hat, nods her head making the rose feather in the hat shake).

I lead her out into the cool air and right away he walks up

(She points to MALAKHII).

"I'm leading you to the Administrative Councillor". Me? "You, if you please". From the church I wouldn't leave I say, but to the Administrative Councillor's, be so good.

RIDING BREECHES

I was standing there. This here woman walked up . . . a citizen, and she asked me about something, and then quickly: "Go to the Administrative Councillor's". Permit me, I am a member of the children's organizations, the aviational defense against gas attack, and the housing. And me to the Administrative Councillor"s? What for?

(He shouts as if he were barking).

For what purpose?

MALAKHII

For what? Oh, people! This was set down in the ancient Indian Rig-Veda scriptures:[25] do not strike a woman, even with a flower. And what did you do?

(MALAKHII speaks to Riding Breeches and the OLD MAN).

On the eve of socialism you thrust aside a woman and struck her with an offensive word!

RIDING BREECHES

Me? I struck?

MALAKHII

You--

(He points to the to MADAM APOLINARA and

the OLD BACHELOR).

--have done still worse. Next to a church you were hunting for a girl.

(He points to OLIA).

Oh, people!

MADAM APOLINARA

Me? On the contrary. I myself am a woman!

(RIDING BREECHES is perturbed).

RIDING BREECHES

Permit me, monsieur! Whom did I strike? Whom?

MALAKHII

Whom?

(He adresses himself to AHAPIA, an old

religious woman).

Citizen about what, did you want to ask them? I can see that you came from a village.

AHAPIA

Ehe. Came with a great effort my dear. People told me that the road to Jerusalem is already cleared.

MALAKHII

Excuse me and permit me to interrupt your speech. What did you ask them about?

AHAPIA

If they knew if now there was a road to Jerusalem, I asked.

(MALAKHII speaks to the OLD MAN and

RIDING BREECHES).

MALAKHII

And you, what did you answer her?

OLD MAN

We?

RIDING BREECHES

Permit me. Me?

MALAKHII

Yes you! Whereas you should have told her that now one must not go to a grave in Jerusalem but to Lenin's mausoleum. To the new Jerusalem . . . plus to the new Mecca. To Moscow. You said: "pass on, pass on dear mother". Outrageous! Unbearable! and to whom I ask? A woman, a villager.

RIDING BREECHES

Not one outrageous word! On the contrary. From my childhood years I am of the military. Courteousness is my elemental force. My ideal!

(MALAKHII speaks to the OLD MAN).

MALAKHII

And you. Instead of telling her and making fast all of the above mentioned. That quickly, quickly, quickly will come the time when all the world will sing in Moscow. Blessed, blessed new Jerusalem. The glory of the revolution has radiated on you. You said, "leave us alone". At the goods exchange!

OLD MAN

But I didn't know that, that sort must be directed to Moscow.

(MALAKHII speaks with an even greater elation).

MALAKHII

Aha! He didn't know! Clear proof I say and I'll show you further!

(MALAKHII speaks to the pale OLIA).

Tell me please, and forgive me for these words, with what did they lure you? For what kind of profession did they tempt you,

(He points to MADAM APOLINARA and MATILDA).

there next to the church today?

(OLIA remains silent).

Did they say to you thirty roubles a month, good food . . . even sweets, under-clothing . . . garments.?

(As MADAM APOLINARA speaks the red feather in her hat quivers).

MADAM APOLINARA

Par-don! How is it you're not ashamed?

(She turns to OLIA).

Tell them darling . . .

(She then turns to MATILDA).

and you Matilda. Tell them what I said, what we talked about, when between us we led her out of the church. My child, I said . . . Matilda, say it the way I said it.

MATILDA

My child you said, Madam Apolinara.

(MATILDA smokes a cigarette, heavily dragging in smoke).

My child, do you not sometimes work as a typist?

(MADAM APOLINARA turns to OLIA).

MADAM APOLINARA

And how did you answer my dear? Well? Well?

(Seeing that OLIA doesn't answer, MADAM APOLINARA changes her voice so it sounds young and mournful and answers for her).

"I'm a female orderly" she said, my child. I sighed heavily, seriously, and asked . . . Matilda tell them what I asked about.

MATILDA

"In which hospital? What is your pay"? . . . you asked her.

(APOLINARA again imitates OLIA and answers).

MADAM APOLINARA

"At the Saburova,[26] eighteen a month", said the child. Well Matilda gave a wail.

(She turns to MATILDA).

Show us how you wailed.

MATILDA

"Oi"! Well at that place you can become crazy.

MADAM APOLINARA

Matilda wailed, and I added: "Oh, my unfortunate child! Like a pale little girl, a poor orphan, I too once served. I served. I cried. I cried, up until . . . I cried out my fate!"

(She turned to MATILDA).

Well didn't I say it like that? Wasn't our conversation like that? Pardon, and I beg you. I know what I said and to that, what else I am going to say.

(MALAKHII who was been watching her every work, stops her with his hand).

MALAKHII

More accurately: I served, I served, I cried, I cried, up until I couldn't spit even so: ptfu! So I went to a certain dear madam. You said: "Look Matilda is the same". "Look you and her, her and you", you said. You even compared them! Oh, woman!

MADAM APOLINARA

Me?

MALAKHII

And you lured her and tempted her by saying that at your place there is eat and drink. That it is beautiful to walk, sweet to breathe, it is hygenic and there would be chocolates.

MADAM APOLINARA

Matilda tell them. Did I say that darling?

MATILDA

On the contrary and nothing resembling it!

OLD BACHELOR

I was present. Nothing like that or resembling that was spoken by this Madam citizen. On the contrary. Even though I don't know her social origin, I will say her conduct with Olia was such that you don't need the eighth of March.[27]

MALAKHII

It is foretold and it is written that there is nothing beyond the classes, and I say right here for you, right here for you, is a solidarity of evils beyond the classes.

(MALAKHII speaks to the OLD BACHELOR).

Well who if not you first stepped up to her, with oranges, and like a serpent temptingly seduced her before the doors next to the church. So she would forget about Kyriushka and fall in love with you. And who, if not Olia, cried out bitterly, spilled your oranges and then ran into the church to lose her socialist morality.

OLD BACHELOR

So it comes out that I instigated her to go into the church? Ha! Ha! I know all the anti-religious agitation from memory and, besides, the whole time I was agitating so she would throw away everything and not be frightened of God.

MADAM APOLINARA

And I led her out of the church.

(FIRST COMMANDANT goes to OLIA and a addresses her seriously and with sensitivity).

FIRST COMMANDANT

Please tell me my friend, is it true that they were persuading you . . . coaxing you to throw down your Soviet work and go . . . well . . . into another job, or what?

(OLIA speaks after a pause).

OLIA

No.

(The SECOND COMMANDANT raises his eyebrows).

SECOND COMMANDANT

No? Well then, was anyone intrusive? Anyone offend you with words or look at you ill-manneredly? Say it sincerely. Don't be afraid. I guarantee you that no one will make any unpleasantness about this.

OLIA

I am not frightened and I say no!

(OLIA's voice becomes infected with anger).

Since you wish to know, the most burning thing to me was him!

(OLIA points to MALAKHII).

He followed me the whole morning, Like a spirit.

(OLIA speaks angrily to MALAKHII).

Tell me, why were you following me? For what reason?

MALAKHII

Not following you, but guarding you from those who were truly following and hunting you.

(OLIA speaks with anger and laughter at the same time).

OLIA

Could you have at one time been a madman?

MALAKHII

For twenty-seven years.

(Everyone moves because they are disturbed by this statement. OLIA takes two steps toward MALAKHII).

OLIA

What? Where exactly?

MALAKHII

In my own household.

OLIA

And I thought you truthfully--

MALAKHII

--Truthrully Olia, for the present household is mad. The first stair is mad. The corner is mad. In short a macorner.[28]

OLIA

And love?

MALAKHII

It is a spirit! the sky-blue spirit . . . that is, a vision . . . because not put into effect, is it not it that led you into the church today?

(OLIA drops her head and MALAKHII takes two steps towards her).

And is it not they

(MALAKHII indicates the OLD BACHELOR and MADAM APOLINARA).

who benefited from your situation? Lured and tempted you to go into the parting of womanhood in order to play on the strings of universal passion.

(OLIA raised her head).

OLIA

No!

(OLIA turns violently and leaves. Then the OLD BACHELOR speaks to MALAKHII).

OLD BACHELOR

Ha?

(MADAM APOLINARA throws herself after OLIA).

MADAM APOLINARA

My child! Olia!

(OLIA gives MADAM APOLINARA such a look that MADAM APOLINARA bites her tongue. MADAM APOLINARA then turns to MALAKHII).

If you please, now you lead her! If you please! I have an income for myself.

(MADAM APOLINARA turns to the COMMANDANTS).

Finally, I would beg protection from this sort and similar situations. And especially at the Ad-min-is-tra-tive Councillors. Matilda!

(Demonstratively MADAM APOLINARA walks away from MALAKHII).

MATILDA

Me also!

(MATILDA walks away).

OLD BACHELOR

But this is slander! Provocation!

(OLD BACHELOR walks away).

OLD MAN

Of course.

(OLD MAN walks away dragging his feet).

RIDING BREECHES

And for what?

(RIDING BREECHES walks away).

Scene 3

GODFATHER, unshaven and rough looking walks into Command Headquarters. Timidly walking behind him, carrying a bundle, is LIUBUNIA.

GODFATHER

Calmly! He's here!

(GODFATHER slowly and silently walks up to MALAKHII. Stops and looks at him. GODFATHER passes by MALAKHII, then returns to his initial position and then approaches MALAKHII again).

FIRST COMMANDANT

For what business have you come Comrade? To see whom?

(GODFATHER gives the FIRST COMMANDANT a severe look. He then walks away from MALAKHII and stands and waits a while wondering if MALAKHII will respond or smile. GODFATHER then walks up to MALAKHII for the third time).

GODFATHER

At least say hello my friend. If you will remain silent then I will remain silent!

(GODFATHER speaks to the COMMANDANTS

and everyone else).

Há? . . . We narrowly escaped being struck down by an automobile and we get this kind of cold reception.

(LIUBUNIA timidly approaches MALAKHII).

LIUBUNIA

Papon'ka! Mama . . .

(LIUBUNIA'S lips begin to quiver and she

is unable to speak any further).

GODFATHER

Calmly! Well, what is it my friend! Greetings from your wife and my dearest friend.

(LIUBUNIA overcomes her fear).

LIUBUNIA

She said, I'll put a curse on you Liubunia if you come back without papon'ka.

GODFATHER

Calmly! She sent her greetings and wept and passed this on. That she has three daughters: Faith, Hope, and Love.[29]

(GODFATHER addresses everyone).

My godchildren.

(GODFATHER then turns back to MALAKHII).

Faith and Hope she has left at home, while Love she has sent for you.

MALAKHII

Ghosts of the past! Begone from my sight!

LIUBUNIA

Papon'ka---

(LIUBUNIA wanted to say something but GODFATHER has interrupted by passing her some water).

GODFATHER

Drink Liubunia! Drink my godchild. Even though the water is cold it's warmer than the blood and heart of your father.

(GODFATHER speaks to MADAM APOLINARA).

Could you even think that he is her rightful father?

(MADAM APOLINARA quietly speaks).

MADAM APOLINARA

I'm resting. Tell me, under whom does he serve here? In what way?

GODFATHER

Him? He doesn't serve anywhere. On the contrary,even though he is a full grown man, he is an homeless delinquent child. It's three weeks since he ran away from home.

MADAM APOLINARA

Aha-a! That is what he is.

(MADAM APOLINARA speaks to her own people).

He is a nobody. Do you understand?

RIDING BREECHES

How can he be?

MADAM APOLINARA

He ran away from home and his daughter is searching for him.

OLD BACHELOR

Aha-a! With a mistress?

MADAM APOLINARA

Only himself! He took the money, everything entirely, and now the daughter has caught up with him. Do you understand? He hasn't any right to lead us to the Administrative Councillors, and to ask questions besides. He hasn't any rights and I'm not staying here a minute longer. Matilda! Allons . . . home!

(MADAM APOLINARA speaks to the COMMANDANTS).

Au revoir!

(MADAM APOLINARA exits).

MATILDA

Me also!

(MATILDA exits).

OLD BACHELOR

I long since!

(OLD BACHELOR exits).

OLD MAN

He-he! Me too.

(OLD MAN exits dragging his feet).

RIDING BREECHES

For what?

(RIDING BREECHES exits).

MALAKHII

All this, plus everything before, plus the fact that they ran away, still convinces me how urgency is necessary and only for my projects about the reform of the individual.

(MALAKHII speaks to the COMMANDANTS).

Where are my projects? One and a half years I carried them in my head. Half a year I wrote and rewrote them in beautiful caligraphy. Where are they?

SECOND COMMANDANT

I already told you---

Urgently give them for inspection to the A.C.P.C.! You must give them today! Do you hear? No, give them immediately! Immediately! Why are you standing? Is it possible to stand still today when we ourselves saw and heard. That's what happening to people in spite of the fact that all around them radios are playing, streetcars are grazing, cars are bussing!

SECOND COMMANDANT

Listen here my precious. For the writing of two beautiful, I'll say extraordinary projects, you spent two years?

MALAKHII

Yes.

SECOND COMMANDANT

And you wish that those kind of projects be inspected and learned, and they must be seriously and thoroughly learned, in only two weeks?

MALAKHII

What is this leading up to?

SECOND COMMANDANT

You see it is necessary to have more time, so that for example the State Economic Plan could learn your projects. I would advise you to sit on any sort of post. Among other things there is a directive from the D.E.C. to give you a post. Wait for a decision on you projects and in the meantime, maybe write a couple of new ones.

(MALAKHII quietly thinks to himself).

MALAKHII

So be it! I agree.

(The COMMANDANTS are in joy).

FIRST COMMANDANT

Yes?

SECOND COMMANDANT

There that's wonderful! And to this, your daughter has come for you.

GODFATHER

Not only my godchild, but also myself, the godfather!

SECOND COMMANDANT

And the Godfather. There, all together you can return to your district.

GODFATHER

And my friend when we returned I will wish you good health on the day of your angel.

(GODFATHER speaks to the COMMANDANTS).

Today he is forty-seven years old.

(GODFATHER speaks to LIUBUNIA).

Think of how it is at home for the neighbors and the people because of this. That the man's day of the angel is there, and yet that same man isn't!

MALAKHII

I agree . . . on these terms. That there be a post for me, here in the capital, in the A.C.P.C. Even if as a doorkeeper, but it must be here.

SECOND COMMANDANT

A fine thing! What are you saying my pigeon? All the posts in the A.C.P.C. are occupied . . . the doorkeeper's also. To release someone to post you, you yourself understand, is inconvenient. Live people are sitting--

MALAKHII

I will stand. Give me a post where I can stand while everyone is sitting. Otherwise, I will stand here like Simon Stovpnyk,[30] and will stand so until the A.C.P.C. investigates my projects! In addition to that I beg you not to smoke!

SECOND COMMANDANT

Excuse me!

MALAKHII

In front of this painful placard . . . it shouts and shouts and no one listens to it. And this is the A.C.P.C.--

FIRST COMMANDANT

Only you don't shout!

GODFATHER

Calmly!

MALAKHII[31]

Millions are looking with supplication on this their highest institution. On this mount. The transfiguration of the Ukraine into a new Mt. Tabor.[32] And you walk under this placard and break the first most important declaration of socialism: do not smoke! No, once again I am convinced that without my urgent reform of the individual all placards are only a patch on old clothing. Where are my projects? Right now with my own hands, I will pass them on to the head of the A.C.P.C. He'll understand because he sees and hears that they; people, people, and people, may be harmful to the revolution.

GODFATHER

On the first scratch[33] you are an example. Because my friend, my friend, who if not you came to your comrades who are special people experienced in the revolution and have gotten in their way?[34]

(MALAKHII does not pay attention to any of this).

MALAKHII

Reform is urgently necessary. Most urgently I say, because you see what's happening to the individual. Can you see?

(MALAKHII indicates AHAPIA, the old pilgrim, who sits dozing on a stool and snores quietly).

You see? Do you hear? Has just walked into her Administrative Council and already has fallen asleep. There is a clear example for the urgency of reform. Summon the head of the A.C.P.C.! Only I beg you do it quickly. This will be an interesting and instructive spectacle. The most outstanding son of the people; the head of the A.C.P.C. will awaken in his Command Headquarters the darkest element of his people in the presence of a reformer from those same people.[35] Oh my friends! Quickly summon the head! To business and call a photographer.

(MALAKHII continues as if in dream).

He will enter . . . the head . . . she will be stirred. Among other things tell him not to forget the mace . . . because a head needs a mace . . . he will come in . . . he will stir her with the mace and ask: who are you citizen who came and fell asleep?

(AHAPIA vaguely hears this question).

AHAPIA

Ahapia Savchykha! I'm weary from walking my dear. I'm going to Jerusalem.

MALAKHII

Where? The head will repeat.

AHAPIA

Into Jerusalem or to Mt. Athos.[36]

MALAKHII

Your journey is a dark one citizen, and not one of progress, the head will say.

AHAPIA

Dark my dear one. It is so dark that you walk and you don't know if the road is that way or if it isn't . . . and nobody knows. In the village it was spoken by our people in such a way, as if the Soviet power had bought the Grave of Our Lord from the Turks and had opened the road for those receiving the sacrement. Is it like this?

MALAKHII

Oh people, people the head will say. And then add, highly courteously: now one must go not to Jerusalem but to a new goal.

AHAPIA

To where my dear?

MALAKHII

Where to? To the above indicated, the great, No. 666006003. The sky-blue goal. Then the citizen will return to her village walking and preaching the new and blessedly beautiful word!

AHAPIA

No. I vowed to go to Jerusalem! I sold my house and everything completely in order at least to get there or to Mt. Athos. I've seen the painted one. Shining. And the Mother of God on the little clouds . . . I should return without beholding that?

(MALAKHII, still as if in a dream).

MALAKHII

Oi, return citizen, the head will say.

AHAPIA

Oi, I won't return.

MALAKHII

Oi, you will return I will add.

AHAPIA

Oi, no!

(MALAKHII becomes irritated).

AHAPIA

No!

(MALAKHII becomes hotheaded).

MALAKHII

You are a slave!

(AHAPIA becomes joyful).

AHAPIA

At one time the monks in the monastery called me that. Slave of God, Ahapia.

(MALAKHII walks away).

MALAKHII

Oi, what a slave! She looks into socialism as one who searches for plums in the dark. It's a pity that I don't have a mace.

GODFATHER

Question!

(MALAKHII turns around).

This one is not to you my friend.

(GODFATHER addresses the COMMANDANTS).

A question! And in all clearness!

SECOND COMMANDANT

Please! In all clearness

GODFATHER

Is it possible that the Administrative Council doesn't have the power to chase my friend home? At least down the road used for convicts.

(SECOND COMMANDANT shrugs his shoulders).

SECOND COMMANDANT

There isn't any reason.

GODFATHER

What do you mean there isn't? The man has run from home. From his wife, who is also my friend. Blow after blow right in the heart. His daughters are unconscious.

(GODFATHER turns to LIUBUNIA).

I'm thinking godchild, if the chickens haven't perished. Who will look after them, let us assume today, when it is so hot and altogether awkward with nature?

(GODFATHER wipes himself with his handkerchief and then addresses the COMMANDANTS).

To add to this all the neighbors and all the people of the town are stirring and walking about. They talk to themselves and ask, what kind of authority is this when under it fathers can run away from home?

SECOND COMMANDANT

Turn him over to the courts.

GODFATHER

In reply to those sort of bureaucratic words, permit me to say that I am not pleased with the Soviet authority.

SECOND COMMANDANT

What can be done?

GODFATHER

Calmly! I'm not pleased and this is my judicial right. However, it is not about that, that I came to tell the Administrative Council.

SECOND COMMANDANT

Well then, what about?

GODFATHER

Here is a written request. Now please read it aloud in front of him, in front of me, and in front of my godchild.

(SECOND COMMANDANT begins to read silently. The FIRST COMMANDANT walks up and begins to read aloud).

FIRST COMMANDANT

. . . in support of the program of the communist party for free state medical care on the other hand, secondly in support as it were to the sick in the head, our father and friend, my godchild and I collectively trouble the Administrative Council in order to send our father to a mental home for tests, and even if his intelligence is slightly amused, then--

GODFATHER

It goes on to say that the pre-war advocate said that the Administrative Council does not have the right to throw out not only mine, but also a godchild's requests.

LIUBUNIA

Only it isn't true--

(GODFATHER interrupts LIUBUNIA).

GODFATHER

Calmly!

(The FIRST COMMANDANT has finished reading).

FIRST COMMANDANT

Very well. We'll think--

GODFATHER

Think! Only I beg you, don't think too long.

(MALAKHII speaks to GODFATHER).

MALAKHII

Me to a mental home? Me? How could you do this. I have been sent by the people.

GODFATHER

You lie my friend! All the neighbors, all the people have sent me here to turn you back home.

MALAKHII

I walked through more than a hundred villages, small towns and farms while coming to Kharkiv, the capital of the Ukrainian S.S.R. Till today the dust from the roads of the steppes is on my feet. I drank water from a hundred wells and springs while I was resting. I gossiped with the people. I am their delegate!

GODFATHER
You are lying! You ran away from home.

MALAKHII
I am an all-Ukrainian delegate my friend!

GODFATHER
On the contrary. Even though soon all of the Ukraine will become delegates, you and I will never, in all the world! And so I say it would be better if we went home.

(MALAKHII speaks to the COMMANDANTS).

MALAKHII
Firstly I demand that you chase him out of here. Secondly, urgently summon the head of the A.C.P.C. and all the councillors here. I am taking it upon myself right here and now to show you on Ahapia here, how the urgent reform of the individual must be performed. Well? Why are you all just standing there?

GODFATHER
And I'm demanding also! Not only I but my godchild here, my friend's wife there, for the neighbors and for the people of whom I already spoke as to their walking and questioning. Urgently send him there!

(MALAKHII is offended. He then grandly

speaks).

MALAKHII
Me? A reformer?

(MALAKHII walks up to the telephone).

Station? Tell the head of the A.C.P.C. and all the councillors to fasten their badges to their buttonholes and come to Command Headquarters for a meeting. Urgently. Do you hear? Order of the day: a lecture by the reformer Malakhii about the urgent reform of the individual as to be clearly shown on Ahapia. Such is the sky-blue distance today and she is standing there cracking sunflower seeds. Don't interrupt! Whose interrupting there?[37]

FIRST COMMANDANT

Comrade reformer! I beg you to order!

(As the FIRST COMMANDANT leads MALAKHII away GODFATHER takes over the telephone).

GODFATHER

My commissar friends! Don't listen to him! Don't listen I say because can't you see that he has become . . . not of the fullest intelligence. A little faint in the head. Don't interrupt me!

(The FIRST COMMANDANT takes the telephone away from GODFATHER and rings back to the station).

FIRST COMMANDANT

Hello . . . we've hit on a small tragi-comedy. It's those same ones from Yesterday. No, from the small town called Yesterday. No they're not drunk. In a little while this will become all clear.

(A COURIER enters. The FIRST COMMANDANT addresses MALAKHII).

They've rung from the A.C.P.C. and begged you to come to see the assistant-head.

(MALAKHII becoming joyful speaks to GODFATHER).

MALAKHII

How about that, my friend!

(MALAKHII replies in a grand manner).

Ring him back and tell him I'm coming. No better still, let me go to the telephone and I will ring him myself. From today, between myself and the official government there is no middleman. But that's enough of that!

FIRST COMMANDANT

He has already walked away from the telephone. Among other things he begged you to come urgently. You are expected for a tribute from the A.C.P.C.

MALAKHII

What rapture! I'm off! Among other things, you get ready too, Ahapia. I will have you appear before the assistant-head of the A.C.P.C. as clear proof of my projects.

AHAPIA

Maybe he will tell if there now is a road to Jerusalem?

FIRST COMMANDANT

They begged that it be confidential. Do you understand?

MALAKHII

Aha! Well then Ahapia, you remain here for now. I'll quickly return. Which way do you go? Which way?

(FIRST COMMANDANT writes out a packet of forms and gives them to the COURIER).

FIRST COMMANDANT

This here friend will lead you there.

(FIRST COMMANDANT speaks to the COURIER).

Please lead my friend, the reformer, to the Saburova Villa.

MALAKHII

Thank you.

(MALAKHII shows GODFATHER an insulting gesture and leaves after the COURIER).

GODFATHER

Where have you directed him?

FIRST COMMANDANT

Just as you wished . . . to the psychiatrists for enlightenment!

(AHAPIA makes her way to the telephone, cautiously takes off the horn and whispers into it).

AHAPIA

Comrades! I beg you, how is it possible for me to reach Jerusalem?

END OF ACT II

ACT III

Scene 1

MALAKHII is in the garden of the Saburova Villa. The patients, as if they were ravens, are making pecking motions, cawing, swirling, and shouting around him.

MALAKHII

Hey black ones! Silence! God had not even had time to create the world before they covered the heavens and pecked at the first golden star and made a sieve out of the sun. It is dark for me and cold.

(In response to MALAKHII'S mournful shouting one of the sick turns to MALAKHII).

FIRST PATIENT

Reform the sun!

(MALAKHII makes a movement with his arms and his head).

MALAKHII

I will reform it.

(A SECOND PATIENT shows a great tension to everything he is listening to, and he whispers secretively).

SECOND PATIENT

Quietly, I beg you.

Scene 2

OLIA, a female orderly, walks up with the male orderly TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH, who is an older man and a bachelor.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Olia Manoilovna!

OLIA

I've already told you--

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Olia!

OLIA

Let go of me!

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

He has already led you into disgrace and I have another love on my mind altogether. You come to me or else I will come to you.

(OLIA walks away from TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH).

OLIA

I'll tell the one in charge.

(The FIRST PATIENT speaks to MALAKHII).

FIRST PATIENT

It is the professor who has purposely let them into the garden. So they would peck at my head . . . look here how they've pecked it already.

(FIRST PATIENT falls to his knees).

Chase them out!

(MALAKHII makes a single motion).

MALAKHII

I will chase them out!

Scene 3

A THIRD PATIENT, who the whole time has been sweeping away something next to himself, walks up.

THIRD PATIENT

Sweep up the crumbs! Look . . . they've made crumbs.

Scene 4

A FOURTH PATIENT has run up with a yellow flower.

FOURTH PATIENT
Have you seen Olia? Today she is charming. She is . . . beautiful. Hers is such a delicate and fragrant sex gland.

(FOURTH PATIENT smells the flower).

Such a kind I've never seen, even though I once had a love.

FIRST PATIENT
They even peck at the gland.

THIRD PATIENT
Let them peck, as long as they don't trample.

(SECOND PATIENT begins to tremble).

SECOND PATIENT
Quietly . . . They'll hear you.

FOURTH PATIENT
I once had love with girls, women, old ladies . . . I remember where it was. First in the kitchen, then in the storehouse, in the cemetary, in the church yard . . . grass with dew and bells . . . there are bells still . . . a little white apron, a crescent moon from the right side.

THIRD PATIENT
This was on the crumbs, on the bread!

FOURTH PATIENT
Wait! One hundred seven women altogether in fifteen years, fourteen thousand five hundred thirty . . . thirty.

FIRST PATIENT
Help me chase them away! Woo-woo-woo . . .

(FIRST PATIENT shouts mournfully and starts running around and jumping. The others run after him. Everyone with his own movement, and outcry, or a song).

Scene 5

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH walks up and the FOURTH PATIENT questions him.

FOURTH PATIENT

Have you seen Olia?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Go over there. She's there.

(TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH points in a direction opposite from OLIA).

FOURTH PATIENT

Hers is beautiful and fragrant . . . like a rose . . . her sex gland. I saw it.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Where did you . . . see?

FOURTH PATIENT

I was sitting there in the shrubs and she walked up . . .

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Well?

FOURTH PATIENT

She was picking flowers . . .

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Well? Well?

FOURTH PATIENT

And I saw it . . . on her leg, next to her knee . . . and in the night she came to me and if it weren't for the cat . . .

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

What cat?

FOURTH PATIENT

The one which this night again brought me three kittens . . . Tell me what right has the cat to meow to everyone that the kittens are from me.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
You've already lost yourself. Go there, to the others.

(FOURTH PATIENT walks away).

FOURTH PATIENT
Soon as I awake in the night, she is already there with her kittens . . . meowing, meowing, to everyone . . . meow, meow, meow . . .

Scene 6

OLIA walks up to quiet the

FOURTH PATIENT. TROKHIM

IVANOVYTCH blocks her way.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
This intellectual says you were coming to him in the night.

OLIA
Everyday it gets worse for him.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
And maybe there's truth in this?

OLIA
What? My God? Trokhim Ivanovytch!

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
I'm not to blame. Besides it's not only this kind of gossip can come out about you.

OLIA
Gossip?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
I know about everything Olia. How and where you were frolicking and how you fed Kyriushka with ice-cream. And how you sprinkled flowers on the bed linens. Took off your white shirt.

(OLIA wavers).

OLIA
It's not true!

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
Not true? I know everything about your love and can even tell you what time of night you tied Kyriushka to yourself with your braid, and so slept.

OLIA
How is it that . . . that you found out? My God! Who told you about this?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
Who, you ask?

OLIA

Tell me!

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

You're beautiful right now. This shame is very becoming to you. Eyes, like two heavenly planets, and so on . . .

(OLIA speaks with tight lips).

OLIA

Who?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

About the ice-cream, a bird made it known to me because from the door where it was sitting it saw everything clearly. About the bed linens and the flowers, a moth, a butterfly. And about the braid, a fly. Ha,ha,ha. Well, well . . . I am joking because what is a fly? A stupid insect! Ha,ha,ha.

OLIA

What am I to do now?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Nothing else but to spit on Kyriushka, anyhow he is now wooing another.

OLIA

Is it possible to spit on your own love?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

If you don't spit . . . the gossip will go--

OLIA

Trokhim Ivanovytch! How can you want to expose me before the whole world to jeer at? So my heart would burn away? What have I done to you?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Nothing. For the reason that you would conceive your love for me because I'm broken without it. Do you hear? It's time to think about myself.

(OLIA is wringing her hands).

OLIA

Tell me how you found out?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

About what?

OLIA

Well . . . about the ice-cream, the bed linens, the flowers. . .

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

I've already told you: a bird, a butterfly, a fly--

OLIA

Trokhim Ivanovytch! Tell me!

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Beg me.

OLIA

Trokhim Ivanovytch!

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Beg!

OLIA

My darling. Tell me.

(TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH takes OLIA in his arms and pulls her to him).

Let me go!

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Now, now . . . don't get stubborn.

OLIA

Don't crush my hands!

Scene 7

Enter the FIFTH PATIENT bent over heavily and pressing his hands together.

OLIA

Help me!

(TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH speaks to OLIA).

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

This one, it appears, thinks he carries a huge boa constrictor on his back whose tail is roaming about somewhere on the other side of the world. My love without you returning it is worse than that boa, because it crushes the heart and not the hands. Like this! Like this!

(OLIA cries out).

OLIA

Don't torture me!

FIFTH PATIENT

I can't! I'm broken down! Soon I'll let go. Right away there'll be a catastrophe. Help me!

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

He told me. Kyriushka.

OLIA

Him!

(FIFTH PATIENT speaks to MALAKHII).

I can't crush it . . . it's a boa . . . universal wrong. As soon as I free it, it will crush the entire world. Help me!

(MALAKHII moves his hand).

MALAKHII

I'll help you.

OLIA

Was it really him?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
You still don't believe it? On you, here

(He points to OLIA'S spine).

is your birthmark. Yes?

(He points to OLIA'S breasts).

The left one is a little larger than the right one. Yes? And you like it so that always . . .

(TROKHIM whispers something in OLIA'S ear).

OLIA
And didn't he tell you that here in me now is his child?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
A trifle! A double abortion: Kyriushka from your heart and the baby from your stomach. And there goes the whole problem.

OLIA
And about his disease, did he say anything?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
What kind of disease? You're joking Olia Manoilovna!

OLIA
Would you like to satisfy yourself?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
Well. Well. He did this to harm me because of that money. Here is a wretch, ha! And why didn't you say that from the start? Is it possible to tease like that!

(TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH leaves. OLIA falls to the ground crying heavily).

FIFTH PATIENT

Right away there'll be a catastrophe! I'm letting go! Help me!

(MALAKHII who was unnoticably following TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH and OLIA enters. He is pacing and agitated more than ever before).

MALAKHII

Urgently! Urgently is needed the reform of the individual! Right now I say, or never! Together with this I am convinced that no one with the exception of myself will make such reforms. Yes. Only I don't know from where to start. A whirlwind of ideas: sky-blue ones, green ones, yellow ones, red ones . . . there are so many! A whole snowstorm! Most of them are sky-blue ones . . . in my terms, they will be the most beautiful and the most useful in my reform. They must be caught . . . here is one! Here's another. Here a third! Like butterflies . . . and look what's coming out of them!

(Through his sickness his imagination begins to appear before him. Strange projects blossom forth, reforms, and complete revelations. First, arising from the sky-blue vibrations some butterflies have run together. They turn themselves into a kind of sky-blue circle with fire-yellow centers. Resplendently Dekhtiar'ova's A Mercy Peace is heard, mixed with the Internationale, with the jingling brass-like sounds of an incense burner, and with the trilling of larks. Then this picture

begins to paint itself: somewhere within a sky-blue A.C.P.C., sky-blue Commissars are sitting and listening to MALAKHII'S address about the urgent reform of the individual. They clap their hands. They praise him and greet him. He further demonstrates how necessary it is to urgently reform the individuals.. In turn they walk up to him. The OLD MAN in a loose hanging cloak, RIDING BREECHES, MADAM APOLINARA, AHAPIA, TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH, and a PATIENT. MALAKHII covers each of them with a shroud which is sky-blue and preaches over them. When he is satified MALAKHII makes a magical sign with his hand and from under the sky-blue shroud comes a renewed individual who is very well-mannered and extraordinarily good. Like an angel. Then these individuals and more individuals with MALAKHII at their head, walk into the sky-blue distance carrying red poppies and yellow marigolds. On the way they see the mountain, Tabor. OLIA is carrying apples

to be blessed. The people sing Hosanna to her, only somehow in a new way. After this some sort of Jerusalem appears in this sky-blue delerium. Beyond that sky-blue people, sky-blue hills then valleys, sky-blue downpours and then suddenly, a sky-blue nothing).

Scene 8

MALAKHII recovers his senses. OLIA is no longer there. The patients are walking and circulating around.

MALAKHII

Aha . . . on the basis of what I've seen above.

(MALAKHII takes some earth, spits upon it, rubs it, and then smears it on his forehead).

I annoint myself the people's commissar.

(MALAKHII speaks very loudly).

It has happened! Listen everyone, everyone, everyone. In the name of the sky-blue revolution I have annointed myself the people's commissar.

SECOND PATIENT

Quietly. I saw . . . in the grass . . . camels' ears are growing.

MALAKHII

Let them grow!

SECOND PATIENT

They're listening!

MALAKHII

Excellent!

SECOND PATIENT

And they're telling.

MALAKHII

Who?

SECOND PATIENT

Everyone.

(MALAKHII lifts his head high).

MALAKHII

Excellent! Hey camel's ears! Tell everyone, everyone, my first directive.

(The patients repeat the word among themselves).

PATIENTS

Everyone, everyone, everyone.

MALAKHII

With the grace of the great mother of our revolution I have annointed myself the people's commissar. My questionnaires: a staff and a bag of biscuits. I cast off family state. On foot I gained my previous experiences. I have drank water from one hundred seven wells. A commissar without portfolio. My external signs and my insignias: a red ribbon over the left side, a staff and a bugle. For all Ukrainians a straw hat and for great holidays a crown of sunflowers in my hand. The people's commissar Malakhii. No, not like that. The People's Malakhii, in parenthesis, commissar. In short: Peomal . . . no Peomalcom.[38]

PATIENTS

The people's commissar. Peomalcom has appeared.

(FIRST PATIENT falls on his knees).

FIRST PATIENT

Lead us out of here!

(SIXTH PATIENT starts to agitate in the group).

SIXTH PATIENT

He's an imposter! Don't believe him!

THIRD PATIENT

If you are a great authority, command that they don't crumble the holy bread. Let them pick up the crumbs. It is because of this sort that we have starvation. There was an idea to give a wedding when suddely the bride and the mother of the wedding dried up in the melon garden. And instead of watermelons, children's heads grew. What shouting. What crying. They say--

MALAKHII

I will command it. I will lead you out. Everyone. Because I've put your requests and declarations in my heart. To the point. My second directive . . . is for everyone, everyone, everyone to urgently cancel all portfolios and satchels. When the officials ask where they are to put together declarations and complaints, give them the answer. From today all complaints and declarations of the people's will be carried: 1) in the head, 2) in the auricles and ventricles of the heart and not in portfolios or satchels. The People's Malakhii, commissar. In short . . . Peomalcom, Kharkiv. The Saburova Villa.

PATIENTS

Lead us out of here, Peomalcom!

MALAKHII

I will lead you out and lead you forth! Lead you forth to where the heaven dawns and the earth turns sky-blue. Where behind the horizon on golden perches can be heard the singing of sky-blue awakenings of the socialist roosters.

FIRST PATIENT

They won't let us go!

SIXTH PATIENT

Don't believe him!

FIRST PATIENT

The watchman won't let us go.

FOURTH PATIENT

Two heavenly watchmen and a mother hen won't let us go.

MALAKHII

I will tell you such a word that they will let you go. A watchword that will even knock apart a stone wall. Step up for the watchword.

PATIENTS

For the watchword! For the watchword! For the watchword!

(MALAKHII speaks quietly to the PATIENTS).

MALAKHII

Sky-blue dreams.

(The PATIENTS repeating the watchword

throw themselves to the stone wall).

PATIENTS

Yes, lead us out! Lead us!

MALAKHII

Crawl!

SIXTH PATIENT

And what if they catch us?

MALAKHII

They won't catch you! Guarding you is the people's commissar himself. Crawl I say!

(The PATIENTS clamber up the wall and then over it. MALAKHII is left to the last. He spits on his hands).

In the name of the socialist mother of our revolution.

(MALAKHII begins to crawl over the wall).

Scene 9

OLIA runs up.

OLIA

Halt! Where are you going?

(MALAKHII speaks from the top of the wall).

MALAKHII

Don't ask me where to? Haven't you understood enough? It is necessary to go to every house, field, and factory in order to give everyone the sky-blue dreams.

OLIA

Aren't you ashamed to crawl over the wall? Climb down!

MALAKHII

The people's commissar has the right to crawl over all the enclosures on the Ukraine. Over all the stone walls and fences. It is my perogative.

OLIA

I beg and implore you, climb down.

MALAKHII

Hm . . . she is begging me.

(MALAKHII climbs down from the stone wall).

When anyone of the poor and the wronged begs the people's commissar to hang himself he must do it and do it urgently. You see Olia, the people's commissar has paid attention to your request, now you must pay attention to mine. Let me out there.

OLIA

Where?

MALAKHII

There. To everyone, but firstly to the leaders.

OLIA

Stay with us for a little while, rest, and then you will go--

MALAKHII
Olia! Is it possible you think I am mad?

OLIA
Don't say that . . . nobody, nobody has you for a madman.

(MALAKHII speaks in a searching tone).

MALAKHII
Olia. Your eyes are so clear and transparent that even the shadow of a light wrong I can see and read in their depths. Of course you think I'm a madman.

OLIA
But no! It only seems that way to you.

MALAKHII
So you must know Olia. I am not a madman. As it happens, a small error ocurred. Guess what kind?

OLIA
I don't know. Tell me.

MALAKHII
A tiny small one. The escort got confused. Instead of leading me to the villa of the A.C.P.C., he led me to the villa of the Saburova. That's everything. And you Olia should mend this error and let me go.

OLIA
No! No! I can't! Beg the professor. He's wise and good. He will examine you,[39] then quickly let you go altogether. I heard you were only sent here for observation. But really, is it so bad for you here? Look. How green it is. The flowers. The air.

MALAKHII
It isn't sky-blue! Ah Olia! It depends on you now. So the individual will renew himself and the earth in a spacious blue, like a white swan on quiet ponds, will melodiously and freely swim.

(Somewhere beyond the garden MALAKHII

hears a resounding factory horn.

MALAKHII quickly jumps up).

Do you hear? There, there to the leaders. I'll truly be a madman if I am late and will not lead them after me.[40]

OLIA

Oh my God! The factory horn. Twelve o'clock. It's lunch time. Where are the others? Where are they?

MALAKHII

They've already gone.

OLIA

Truly? Gone to lunch?

MALAKHII

Yes. They've gone for a sky-blue lunch.

OLIA

Then let us go also. Quickly.

(OLIA leaves. MALAKHII goes after her. MALAKHII quickly returns by himself and begins climbing the stone wall. He stops to think).

MALAKHII

No . . . she begged me.

Scene 10

OLIA returns.

OLIA

Commissar!

MALAKHII

Don't be afraid. I've withdrawn and given myself for your request. For the reason that I must convince you. Olia, I must give you the sky-blue dreams because in your eyes they have not yet faded. When there will be a whole flood of them, they will hum. You will be my first--

OLIA[41]

I'll call the orderly.

MALAKHII

Olia! I'll fall on my knees. Look. I'll bow to you feet. I'll pray to you. Let me go.

OLIA

Commissar you have a temperature. You need to lie down.

MALAKHII

On the contrary, I need to rise up. Olia, a moment. You just take notice, my projects will give you individuality. because who, who if not you has always been cradling the sky-blue dreams. If you don't let me go this will happen. I'll have to put on a black hat to carry them to their graves.

OLIA

They're calling to us.

MALAKHII

If you let me go he'll come back.

OLIA

Who?

MALAKHII

Kyriushka.

OLIA

He won't come back to me.

MALAKHII

According to my projects, he'll come back. Without fail. At night in the winter

OLIA
Hm . . . and why not in the spring?

MALAKHII
In the winter. You Olia will have lit a night lamp from lonliness. Be spinning the thread of a woman's sadness. And a cradle . . . creak . . . creak. And in the cradle a baby . . . sleep . . . sleep. Mother Olia will be singing the same lullaby as was sung to her.

(MALAKHII sings).

O sleep my baby without any swaddling clothes,
Till your mama returns from the fields.
Three flowers she will bring for you,
The first will be like slumber,
The second a dream,
The third will be good luck . . .

(MALAKHII bends over OLIA).

Does Olia have any tears?

(OLIA speaks through her tears).

OLIA
Well, and after that?

MALAKHII
In the winter at night. There will be a snowstorm over all the steppes, over all the worlds. Whoo . . . whoo . . . whoo! The horses in the steppes . . . stamping . . . stamping. He will be riding back from the march of the revolution.

OLIA
Who?

MALAKHII
According to all my projects: Kyriushka.

OLIA
Yes?

MALAKHII

Without fail. He'll stop at the window. Lightly knock. Open up my dear wife Olia, my trusted friend.

(MALAKHII speaks directly to OLIA).

Olia . . .

(OLIA speaks very quietly

OLIA

. . . will open up.

MALAKHII

All covered with snow he'll stand in the doorway. How are you, he will say. Then Olia will answer:

(MALAKHII sings a known soldiers song

but changes a few words).

"How do you do, how do you do my dearest,
Kindly enter my house"
Then your dearest will say: I am revived because of the reform of the individual. I have done penance for my sins before you in the marches and the fighting for the sky-blue dreams. I've returned to you. Forgive me. Olia will say . . .

(OLIA speaks in a dream-like fashion).

OLIA

I forgive you. I forgive you.

MALAKHII

Then your dearest will place his Olia next to the cradle. Like this.

(MALAKHII seats OLIA on a stump).

He will look at her with love, and also on the dear child. And he will draw you to his heart and will look in your eyes and will kiss your saintly feet, and your cold knees. Olia are you crying?

OLIA

No . . . it's just me . . . a little silly.

(OLIA continues as if in a dream).

Oh how I've suffered waiting for you dearest!

MALAKHII

This will all happen in accordance with my projects. I have to hurry Olia. I'm going.

(OLIA still speaks as if in a dream).

OLIA

Go! Go!

(MALAKHII climbs up on the stone wall.

He sits).

MALAKHII

Let's go together Olia. I'll present you to the A.C.P.C. as the most beautiful clear example of my urgent reforms--

(MALAKHII is cut short by the off-stage

cry of TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH: "Olia

Manoilovna"!).

OLIA

They're calling. Run away!

MALAKHII

I'm not running away, I'm going. I'll wait for you Olia on the holiday of the reviving of our Ukrainian race which will happen on the twelfth of August after the new style.[42] According to the old, on the feast of the Transfiguration.[43] Little things: fear of sweets, paper streamers, and so forth are all in my directives . . .

(MALAKHII jumps behind the wall and

leaves somewhere).

Scene 11

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH comes running up.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
Olia Manoilovna, Stakanchyk's family have come for him.

(TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH looks around).

Where is he?

(OLIA stands in front of the wall at the place where MALAKHII has crawled over).

OLIA
I don't know.

(TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH becomes suspicious).

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
How is it you don't know? I'll write a report to the doctor on duty about how and who is dancing in the bushes with the patients, then you'll know.

(OLIA remains silent).

You told me lies about Kyriushka. He says he doesn't have any kind of disease.

(OLIA remains silent).

Where's Stakanchyk? And where are all the patients? Maybe they've run away?

(OLIA recovers her senses).

OLIA
The sick? They're over there.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
Where?

OLIA
They went to lunch. Stakanchyk too.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Nothing of the sort. They're not there.

OLIA

Then they're over there. Maybe you can't see them because they've gone behind the corner.

(TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH runs to look. Close by are heard disturbed voices: "Someone let out the patients! The sick have ran away!" OLIA crawls out over the stone wall).

Scene 12

Standing expectantly by the office where they are to meet MALAKHII are GODFATHER and LIUBUNIA. Both are quite nervous.

LIUBUNIA

It seems so untrue that right away papon'ka will walk in. That right away we'll take him home. God! How much we've walked, how much we've talked, how much we've begged . . . is it possible Godfather?

GODFATHER

Calmly! I myself an excited. Here godchild, place your hand on my heart.

LIUBUNIA

Oi!

GODFATHER

But no. To my heart.

(LIUBUNIA places her hand to GODFATHERS heart).

How is it?

LIUBUNIA

Oh, how it beats!

GODFATHER

It's not a heart but a mortar! So you hear? Whoop . . . whoop . . . whoop . . . whoop. I'm violently upset.

(GODFATHER continues after a pause).

Yet I'll not be upset because I already can see it. A willow here. Zahnyboha's dike . . . .[44] The shoo-shoo sound of the reeds. My friend sits and I sit. My friend fishes and I fish. In nature and beside her it is quiet, bright. Then dzzzz, tsssim . . . my friend, a mosquito! And my friend: huh?, huh?. He slaps himself on the head.

LIUBUNIA

After fishing papon'ka's whole head was always in bumps.

Scene 13

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH enters.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
Is it you who have come for the patient, Stakanchyk?

GODFATHER
Not only us, but also his daughter here.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
He's no longer with us.

GODFATHER
What do you mean, he isn't?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
He ran away.

(GODFATHER is stupified. LIUBUNIA takes to having spasms).

LIUBUNIA
Oi! Oi! Oi!

GODFATHER
Don't shout because I can't hear anything.

(GODFATHER speaks to TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH).

Tell me, did you hit me?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH
Me? Nothing of the sort.

GODFATHER
Then why is there a hooting in my head?

(LIUBUNIA once again takes to her spasms).

LIUBUNIA
Ran away.

GODFATHER
Don't say it!

LIUBUNIA
Ran away.

GODFATHER

Don't say those words!

(LIUBUNIA begins to cry).

LIUBUNIA

Ra-an a-way.

(GODFATHER speaks to TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH).

GODFATHER

Question!

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Please.

GODFATHER

When did he run away?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Fifteen minutes ago. But don't you trouble yourselves. They've already rung for the militia. He'll be caught right away.

GODFATHER

Thank-you, but now they won't capture him.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

Is that what you think?

GODFATHER

You will not capture him. When in court with his neighbor about a rooster, it was three years before there was a judgement.

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

What has a rooster to do with this?

GODFATHER

It has to do young man, with the character of my dear friend being that way. Once he has started running away, he'll keep running away to his death. Do you understand?

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

I don't understand anything.

GODFATHER

How is that you can't understand! He is running away from you and you don't understand! What will happen if I give you the courts, even to the council. Say that you never guarded my dear friend, that he ran away, that he can do the devil knows what! You will all be bureaucrats after this. And in that way you are no longer necessary to us young man. In all it would have been better to strike me in the heart with a twelve inch cannon than to bring me such a notification. Go, I am unable to look at you!

TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH

And I say the militia will capture him. Call tomorrow.

(TROKHIM IVANOVYTCH exits).

GODFATHER

Now I'll sit down and grieve. Become melancholy, become worried about my friend. Ekh, my friend, my friend! I loved you. Respected you like a full brother. Wore you in my heart and now have worn you out . . . right to my callouses.

(GODFATHER speaks after a pause).

Now having done my grieving, I say, enough. Home Liubunia. And even urgently.

LIUBUNIA

Without papon'ka?

GODFATHER

Not only without papon'ka but also without my friend.

LIUBUNIA

Godfather!

GODFATHER

Home!

LIUBUNIA

Godfather!

GODFATHER

Enough!

LIUBUNIA

Godfather! How can we even appear before their eyes without papon'ka?

GODFATHER
We'll arrive in the night.

LIUBUNIA
Mama will throw a curse on me. How will you be able to go to the church? To the market place? Everywhere they will ask you why you returned without your friend.

GODFATHER
I won't go to church. Why am I all upset for when I've decided to come home, to become sick, and then to die.

LIUBUNIA
You can't without papon'ka.

GODFATHER
Can or cannot, I say let's go!

LIUBUNIA
Who are you now going to catch fish with?

GODFATHER
Myself!

LIUBUNIA
You can't, cannot without papon'ka. Who will sit with you for checkers? Who for politics?

GODFATHER
Myself!

LIUBUNIA
And with whom will you sing:"plant my little green ones?" What about Christmas? What about Easter?

GODFATHER
Myself! Myself I'll sing! Myself I'll become sick! And myself I'll die! Myself!

LIUBUNIA
Godfather! Remember how on your saint day you were leading papon'ka home and you lost your way on your own street. If it hadn't been for our Polkan, you wouldn't have found the gate.

GODFATHER
Don't bring those things up. Am I saying that my friend is a terrible man? Am I saying that? Saying that?

LIUBUNIA

No.

GODFATHER

My heart is worn out from love and grief. Who are we, my friend and I? Who? Little boys . . . little pioneers[45] who ran in contests . . . are we now walking up to our graves?

(GODFATHER speaks after a pause).

He will run over all kinds of commissars. He will jump up to the A.C.E.C. And I should sell my last little pigs in order to turn him back home? Let's go! Home!

LIUBUNIA

I'm not going Godfather.

GODFATHER

What?

LIUBUNIA

I'll search for him myself. If I find him I'll bring back good fortune, if I don't find him--

GODFATHER

You'll perish!

LIUBUNIA

If I don't find him, I'll perish. I'll cause my own death.

GODFATHER

And what about your dear mother? My friend. Godchild, she is lying sick, even dying. From typhus.

LIUBUNIA

When mama was blessing me for the road, kissing my hands, and sprinkling me with her tears she begged me, prayed me, and cursed me that I couldn't return without papon'ka.

GODFATHER

And what about your sisters, Vira and Nadia? They also are lying sick, sick from malaria. No one to offer them any water or to place a compress on their unfortunate foreheads.

LIUBUNIA

I can't! From the time I jumped into the church and prayed. I already sensed that fate would separate us.

GODFATHER

And what if without you all the flowers in the window boxes have dried out? The ones in the little garden dried out too?

LIUBUNIA

I have a dream every night Godfather. I am alone. One on the steppe . . . weaving a wreath of sweet basil and marigolds . . . and they're dried out as if . . . dried out as the ones placed on a dead person's head. Fate foretells and you can't walk around her, Godfather.

GODFATHER

And the little chicks without water are drowning in their tears. And the hen doesn't know what to do next. Where to search for water.

LIUBUNIA

Godfather.

GODFATHER

And in spite of all this you're not coming?

LIUBUNIA

No!

GODFATHER

Aha! This way you want to show that you have papon'ka's character in you. Then know this, know that I also have a character. Three times as solid as my friends and yours. Good-bye!

(GODFATHER begins to walk away. Then

he replies scoldingly).

Think about it! You are going to perish!

(LIUBUNIA is silent).

I say, you'll perish!

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

Scene 1

The workers of the foundry, Sickle and Hammer become surprised as they see some sort of man in a straw hat crawling over the stone wall toward them.

FIRST WORKER

Look. Someone is crawling over. Hey citizen!

SECOND WORKER

Th-th-th . . . this is a spy or a thief maybe, who is making his way to us.

FIRST WORKER

Then he must be arrested!

(The THIRD WORKER speaks in a dignified and quiet manner).

THIRD WORKER

In these times a sensible person wouldn't crawl to us over a stone wall. This a fact however, don't get excited my boys . . . silence and a pair of eyes are much better than a tongue. In this way we'll find out who it is and what's its color.

(The workers go back to their jobs and do not pay any special attention to their guest. Their attitude is: if someone is crawling, let them crawl. MALAKHII speaks from the wall).

MALAKHII

Greetings leaders!

(The workers remain silent, lightly acknowledging the greeting. Having noticed this MALAKHII speaks sharply).

I greet you and at the same time I ask you this. Is it possible that leaders can be shut in by walls? And of this sort?

(MALAKHII points to the factory wall).

Tell me then, if you please, what makes you different from those who are kept in forced labor buildings and in asylums? Stone walls there and stone walls here.

THIRD WORKER

There they confine while here they protect our rights. Because around us there are still many enemies.

MALAKHII

It's time to pull them down my leaders. It is urgent that these stone walls must be destroyed because they block the path to you.

THIRD WORKER

For whom?

MALAKHII

For your friends. Oh leaders I'll tell you.

(The THIRD WORKER speaks to his men).

THIRD WORKER

It seems that for our friends there are gateways and doors.

MALAKHII

They didn't let me through the gate.

THIRD WORKER

Didn't they recognize you, or what?

MALAKHII

They didn't recognize me and didn't acknowledge me in spite of the facts, that I showed them my marks and insignia, that I wrote about them in my first directive, and that everyone who exists in the Ukraine must recognize me through these.

(MALAKHII points to his staff and his straw hat. He then stares at the workers).

Can it be possible that you haven't recognized me?

(MALAKHII ties the red ribbon across his left breast).

Now don't you recognize me? This is what happens when they don't read the directives. Listen once again: with the grace of the great mother of our revolution we annoint Malakhii as the people's commissar.

SECOND WORKER

Well what of it?

(The FIRST WORKER speaks to the THIRD WORKER).

FIRST WORKER

He's drunk.

THIRD WORKER

No, no.

FIRST WORKER

And why not? Look. If only he had drank himself to being a green snake but he's gone as far as to drink himself to being a commissar.

THIRD WORKER

It would be more important if you listened.

(During their conversation MALAKHII has crawled down from the stone wall. He walks up to the workers).

MALAKHII
What is this you're making?

THIRD WORKER
As if you can't see? Forms.

MALAKHII
And I have come to you to make reforms.

THIRD WORKER
What kind?

MALAKHII
Sky-blue ones. More accurately, urgent reform of the individual. Because do you know what it has already led to? The newsmen are shouting, shouting about the rape of two old ladies.

FIRST WORKER
It's just that someone was possesed.

(MALAKHII doesn't understand the irony of this statement).

MALAKHII
And this happened on the eve of socialism. In a country where the people created the most beautiful song about love. About the green periwinkle,[46] the star and the moon, the red cranberry, and lastly where the people's commissar, himself, guards the sky-blue dreams in the night. The rape of two old ladies. Oh people, people!

(From behind the wall is heard the deep-toned voice of a lively youth).

YOUTH (OFF STAGE)
Radio![47] A horrifying rape of two unfortunate old women, the oldest of which was 67!

MALAKHII
Do you hear that?

(FIRST WORKER speaks with irony).

FIRST WORKER
Got pleasure from an old lady.

MALAKHII

I'm certain that if in the evening you gave out questionnaires . . . handbills with one question on them. Who is thinking about what at that time? About what would you guess would be their thoughts for the most part?

THIRD WORKER

I can't say. All sorts of things force themselves into the heads of people.

MALAKHII

Well I can say what.

THIRD WORKER

Very well?

MALAKHII

They don't think and dream about sky-blue reforms but about the forms of women's legs, entirely not turning their attention to the fact that in those dreams love is only restricted to the legs. It doesn't blossom in the eyes. It doesn't sing in the heart. And so, two old ladies are raped. No I can't wait any longer. It's time to start.

(MALAKHII forms his fist like a bugle

and blows the army reveille through it).

Tru-tru-to-ru-ru-to-ru-ru, tru-tru-tu-tu-tu-tu-tru-tu-tu-tu-tru-tu. Sirens are roaring over the factories. Humming are the horns and wires. The Ukraine is singing behind the graves in the valley. Above all this is sounding the golden bugle of the people's commissar. For you my leaders it plays about the sky-blue distance and about the sky-blue dreams--

Scene 2

More workers arrive at the scene.

FOURTH WORKER
Who is this speaker? From who did he come? What does he want?

SECOND WORKER
Sent to us from the commissars.

THIRD WORKER
That's not so! He called himself a commissar.

FIRST WORKER
The way I see it, he's a clown from the circus.

FIFTH WORKER
You can't see anything! This is an artist from a Ukrainian troupe.

(FIRST WORKER speaks to the THIRD WORKER).

FIRST WORKER
I only see this, he's mixed the whiskey with the beer.

THIRD WORKER
Do you think so?

FIRST WORKER
It's a fact!

(THIRD WORKER laughs).

THIRD WORKER
It would be more important if you listened, I say.

MALAKHII
I came to you my leaders to make urgent reform of the individual. Listen to me and no one else.

(Someone whistles)

Who is whistling at the speech of the people's commissar? Who is getting in our way, I ask?

FIRST WORKER
And who's getting in the way of our work?

MALAKHII

There is so much whistling on the Ukraine. The dry winds whistle. The young men whistle at the girls. The militia whistle in the night. On the street they urinate. Old women are raped . . . I came to make urgent reform of the individual and the first strike will be at the reform of the Ukrainian people because within the class of the psalm chanters and the translators--

(A buzzing starts among the WORKERS).

WORKERS

This is a madman!

He's just pretending--

To the administration with him!

Let the old man say what he has to say.

(THIRD WORKER speaks in a calm manner).

THIRD WORKER

It would be more important if you listened, comrades.

MALAKHII

Listen to me my leaders and I will take you out from these smoke covered stone walls. Through the lanes, the back-alleys, past the factories and mills, along the boundaries and paths, beyond the grave mounds into the sky-blue distance I'll lead you. Tru-tu! Tru-tu! People rise up because I'm bringing reform for you. Not a form, but a reform! Tru-tu! Tru-tu! Collect yourselves to a new Mt. Tabor on the twelfth of August, by the old style on the sixth. Carry red poppies, marigolds, but most important bring sky-blue dreams. There we are going to bless ourselves. Bless ourselves, renew ourselves. At the same time bring the Ukrainian language too. Among other things, do you know why our language has stood on the threshold through the ages? God forgot about her when He was mixing up the tongues at the Babylonian tower! Besides that, when the Holy Spirit came down to the Apostles in all languages He only forgot about our Ukrainian language. To this the A.C.P.C. has already turned it's attention, but without me, hardly anything will come of it--

(THIRD WORKER speaks in a loud and

powerful voice).

THIRD WORKER

It comes out and will come out! My friends . . .

(THIRD WORKER makes his way to the front, to MALAKHII).

Are you a peasant?

MALAKHII

No.

(THIRD WORKER speaks point-blank to MALAKHII).

THIRD WORKER

And not a worker?

MALAKHII

I am the people's Malakhii.

THIRD WORKER

And from the lanes and back-alleys, the twisted paths, and even over these stone walls he comes crawling to us this Malakhii. And who are they? It is fine when simply for themselves they are melancholy dreamers. To a great sadness there are enough of those among our brothers. The eyes roll, as in Jesus. There is a sky-blue smoke in their heads. They are always gathering sins and because of them they journey. That's fine I say, if there are still such little Jesus' on donkeys--

MALAKHII

Hosanna to them! They cleanse the earth.

THIRD WORKER

If you wish to cleanse it, change saddles from the donkey--

(A WORKER interjects).

A WORKER

Onto the sanitary barrel.

(Laughter bursts out).

THIRD WORKER

Let it be onto a barrel. Because it is better to be a barrel-maker than such a little Jesus as this one. That's fine I say, when thay are just little Jesus', because that is only half the sorrow. But it is when you feel in their little impotent speeches . . . somewhere in one of them . . . from just two words . . . another music--

MALAKHII

--Sky-blue music.

THIRD WORKER

"Not our class of music," we must then say comrades! Behind their sky-blue reforms are hiding bourgeois chauvinist fangs. Behind this sky-blue fog are adversaries lying in wait. In sky-blue reforms are bound their petty standards and forms. Guard yourselves!

MALAKHII

I announce urgent reform of the individual, my leaders, and I undertake to make it.

(THIRD WORKER shakes his finger).

THIRD WORKER

Oi you make it uncle. Look at yourself. We know you. No it will be better if we make it. In the image and the shape of the proletariat.

MALAKHII

Tru-tu! And will you be able to make the reform of the Ukrainian people? Far away someone is sitting next to a window in a house wrinkling mocassins and looking out to see if the dear old God is bringing him rain for his wheat. If in his sons he can see soldiers and in his daughters servants. Day comes and night comes but there is no dear God. And the rain doesn't come. "The rapids rage; the moon appears; as once it rose before . . . The Sitch is gone . . . The reed-beds ask the Dnieper . . ."

WORKERS

This is an old song.

MALAKHII

. . . Oh where have all our children gone? What country do they roam?"48

THIRD WORKER

Tomorrow where the waterfall is pounding there won't be a moon rising. One can say that tomorrow, electric suns will rise and they will light up the entire kozak steppe. Over all of our Ukraine up to the sea.

MALAKHII

Question: to which sea?

THIRD WORKER

Tomorrow, there where the screaming gull is flying, one can say the sirens of the sea-faring steamboats will sing, The horns of new mills and factories will resound. Today the Dnieprelstan[49] with it's dynamos smashes the sadness and pride of those reeds. Let the mourning of the waterfalls run mad. I heard it on an excursion.

MALAKHII

Throw aside your Dnieprelstan! Right here you can hear it. They shout,"the rape of two old women". Oh my leaders. It won't help!

THIRD WORKER

It will help! It is there that we are starting our reform of the Ukrainian people. There, here, and everywhere, where there is a hand of a worker.

Scene 3

A worker, completely covered with sweat, runs up.

WORKER IN SWEAT

Are the forms ready?

(The WORKERS shout with a mighty effort).

WORKERS

Ready!

WORKER IN SWEAT

Letting out the cast iron!

(He calls in a direction where a growing redness can be seen).

Ready! Let it go!

(A fiery liquid pours out in rivulets along the gutters lighting all the members of the foundry in a hot fiery red light. Glowing and blazing it lights up everyones faces and eyes. Everyone begins to move. They jump across the rivulets. They fall to the forms. With shovels they lead the fiery liquid into the forms. They carry it in ladles. WORKERS shout at MALAKHII during their work).

WORKERS

Out of the way old man!
Hey be careful there!
Stand at a distance! Hey, what, what is your name? . . .
Malakhii!
Well show him where to go out before he melts.

(MALAKHII helplessly rushes about among the fiery rivulets in the smoke and the roar until the FIRST WORKER leads him to the doors).

FIRST WORKER

There's trouble with such reformers.

(MALAKHII recovers his senses and speaks looking at the fire, the roar, and the smoke).

MALAKHII

They have their own red dreams. What a tragedy!

(MALAKHII covers his eyes and goes. In his footsteps there thunders a symphony of glorious work).

END OF ACT IV

ACT V

Scene 1

MADAM APOLINARA is constantly afraid the militia may raid her establishment. She is most uneasy during the night time.

MADAM APOLINARA
Look Ahapia, if sometime the militia should leap into here, you say: "these are my grandchildren Olenka and Liubunia. They've just arrived". For the sacrament . . . or something of that sort.

(AHAPIA agrees with everything).

AHAPIA
Oh my Lord! I'd say that if only you would obtain the road to Jerusalem for me.

MADAM APOLINARA
I'll obtain it!

AHAPIA
Will it be quickly?

MADAM APOLINARA
Wait a while!

AHAPIA
I've been waiting a month already.

(AHAPIA whispers to herself).

No money, no Jerusalem.

(As if on purpose for MADAM APOLINARA'S troubled state, alarm whistles start somewhere in the night).

Scene 2

Jumping forth from a sort of storeroom is a NERVOUS VISITOR.

NERVOUS VISITOR
They're whistling! Akh Madam Apolinara, how often have I advised you to find a safer apartment. So the distance is . . . more distant from the Soviet authority.

(The NERVOUS VISITOR reproachfully and angrily looks at MADAM APOLINARA and then runs up the stairs and through the back door. He has forgotten to do up his suspenders. MADAM APOLINARA follows him wringing her hands).

MADAM APOLINARA
Akh, I know it's torture but what am I to do? We're not legal now!

Scene 3

LIUBUNIA enters from that same storeroom.

LIUBUNIA
It's boring. Let him play.

MADAM APOLINARA
It's not necessary Myron'ka! Do you hear the whistles.

LIUBUNIA
I'll run away!

(MADAM APOLINARA speaks to the MUSICIAN).

MADAM APOLINARA
Well play! Only I beg you, pianissimo, pianissimo.

(LIUBUNIA walks up to speak to AHAPIA).

LIUBUNIA
And what if papon'ka is at home?

AHAPIA
Only God himself knows.

LIUBUNIA
I thought of it and the whole world turned black for me. What if papon'ka is at home and I'm here?

(LIUBUNIA turns to the MUSICIAN).

Louder!

Scene 4

Staggering down the stairs with the FIRST VISITOR and the SECOND VISITOR come the FIRST GIRL and MUSIA. MATILDA is also with them.

MATILDA

Well we've arrived.

FIRST GIRL

My kittens, you will not regret.

FIRST VISITOR

"I have no regrets, retreats, or weepings. All will pass, as the smoke-like blossoms of the white apple trees".

MUSIA

Bravo!

FIRST VISITOR

"Consumed by the withering of gold".[50]

(MADAM APOLINARA to the FIRST GIRL and MUSIA).

MADAM APOLINARA

You've come my little children. And where's Olia?

MATILDA

Some wine! Then about Olia.

(MUSIA to the FIRST VISITOR).

MUSIA

May I have a pear?

FIRST VISITOR

If you please. "I won't be young again".[51] What ever your little soul wants you can have.

BOTH GIRLS

Oi, you're so good!

(The FIRST VISITOR becomes frightened of his own goodness).

FIRST VISITOR

Only with a condition.

BOTH GIRLS

What kind?

FIRST VISITOR

You are only given half a minute to choose.

(FIRST VISITOR takes out his watch).

Half a minute for what you please. Half a minute! One, two!

BOTH GIRLS

Chocolates! Wine! Pastries!

FIRST VISITOR

Exactly what kind of chocolate? What kind of wine?

BOTH GIRLS

Sweet red! No, white!

FIRST VISITOR

Well what kind, tell me?

MUSIA

Candy! Turkish-delight!

FIRST VISITOR

What more is to your taste?

MUSIA

Candy!

FIRST VISITOR

A hundred grams? Two hundred grams? Three hundred grams? Half a minute is up.

FIRST GIRL

So quickly?

FIRST VISITOR

"Life of mine have I dreamt of you[52] . . . ".

FIRST GIRL

I wanted chocolates.

FIRST VISITOR

"As in springs resounding dawn I galloped on my rose steed.[53]

(FIRST VISITOR sits on the table).

MUSIA

Just a moment! We also say to you that for half a minute only, you can do what you wish. Ha-ha-ha! Imagine! Half a minute.

MADAM APOLINARA

Akh Musia, Musia. Really, is it possible to jest like that? The visitors will truly think . . . half a minute.

(MADAM APOLINARA pours wine into small glasses. Visitors entertain the girls. AHAPIA speaks to LIUBUNIA).

AHAPIA

Oh my daughter how can your papon'ka be found for you? And for me the road. My dear, maybe you knew Vakulykha?

LIUBUNIA

I don't know her. I'm not from your lands, dear grandmother.

AHAPIA

I forgot that you are somewhere from the steppes. Well only in the whole region one Vakulykha had been in Jerusalem.

LIUBUNIA

Dear grandmother. My heart hurts. It seems as if I'm going to die.

AHAPIA

And she died, so beautifully. Vakulykha. Came from Jerusalem and on the third day she died.

(FIRST GIRL and MUSIA jump up from the table).

MUSIA

Madam Apolinara!

FIRST GIRL

Dearest mother!

MUSIA

The visitors are begging to dance. Is it permissable?[54]

MADAM APOLINARA

Only I pray you girls, pianissimo! Pianissimo!

(MUSICIAN plays a foxtrot. As the girls and the visitors dance their shadows quickly appear and disappear on the wall).

LIUBUNIA

Here they're playing and dancing and for some reason the windmills that are at the edge of our village keep appearing to me. What if papon'ka is approaching the windmills and I am here?

AHAPIA

It's as if she was asleep. Her face so bright and white. By God I'm not lying. And into her coffin went the fragrant chips, that she had carried from the grave of the Lord, and a little cypress cross. Let God grant it for you my daughter, and for me, and for everyone to die that way. The way Vakulykha died.

(LIUBUNIA goes into the storeroom and AHAPIA keeps speaking).

Unless I write an invitation? Comrades, in this way and in this way Vakulykha died and I wish the same for myself. You won't believe comrades how I dream about it. I walk as if swimming through the air near a warm sea. And the path is in red flowers. And somewhere behind the sea is the splendor to heaven like the glow of evening that occurs in the summer. And you know comrades, if it turns out that I don't make it to Jerusalem, then I already . . . .

(AHAPIA dozes off).

Scene 5

OLIA has brought MALAKHII.[55]

She calls from the doorway.

OLIA
And I am with a visitor! And what a visitor at that!

(The FIRST GIRL and MUSIA, along with their VISITORS, greet OLIA with applause and cries of "hurrah". MUSICIAN strikes a fanfare. MALAKHII speaks from the stairs).

MALAKHII
Look where they already recognize me.

(MALAKHII takes an immense bow).

Greetings to our faithful!

(MADAM APOLINARA speaks to OLIA).

MADAM APOLINARA
It seems that this is Mira's,[56] Liubunia's--

OLIA
--father.

MADAM APOLINARA
What for Olia! In order to trouble the poor child! Why make such a drama!

OLIA
Where is she?

MADAM APOLINARA
Shh! Her head began to hurt. She's sleeping.

OLIA
Mira are you sleeping? She's sleeping!

(OLIA walks up to MALAKHII).

What is more precious commissar, a father or a dream?

MALAKHII
A dream if it's after all the work has been done.

(OLIA laughs wryly).

OLIA
Weariness comes after working. Excuse me, I'm going to change because I got all wet.

(OLIA to everyone).

It's raining outside.

Scene 6

With a rush a THIRD VISITOR arrives.

THIRD VISITOR
Good health to the counter-revolution!

(MADAM APOLINARA has become happy and disturbed at the same time).

MADAM APOLINARA
My God! Girls! Look who's here.

(The FIRST GIRL and MUSIA turn their attention to the THIRD VISITOR).

FIRST GIRL
Ah! Look!

MUSIA
Our "busy" has come.

(THIRD VISITOR looks at his watch).

THIRD VISITOR
Oho! It's fifteen after one. The train is at two. I still have to send a telegram. Fine! A bottle of beer for me. Two bottles of wine and some candy for the girls. Quickly!

MADAM APOLINARA
Maybe you'll have some supper my dear?

THIRD VISITOR
Busy! Busy! Where's Mira?

MUSIA
Mira!

FIRST GIRL
Mira! "Busy" has come to see you.

(MADAM APOLINARA becomes more disturbed).

MADAM APOLINARA

Shh! Pianissimo, girls.

(MADAM APOLINARA imploringly speaks to the THIRD VISITOR).

Maybe today you can pick out another girlfriend for yourself.

THIRD VISITOR

Busy! Counter-revolution! I only want five minutes.

MADAM APOLINARA

She's sick.

THIRD VISITOR

From what exactly?

MADAM APOLINARA

Her head hurts.

THIRD VISITOR

Nonsense!

MADAM APOLINARA

My dear there's going to be a drama.

THIRD VISITOR

"Busy"! Mira! Permissable?

(THIRD VISITOR goes into the private room. MALAKHII speaks to MADAM APOLINARA).

MALAKHII

Who is he?[57]

MADAM APOLINARA

An acquaintance of ours . . . he is very happy and good . . .

MALAKHII

Who has he gone to see?

Scene 7

LIUBUNIA runs in. Behind her is the THIRD VISITOR.

THIRD VISITOR
Where are you going? I'm busy, Mira!

LIUBUNIA
Papon'ka's voice! Let me go! Papon'ka my dear one, my loved one, my precious one, my golden one!

(LIUBUNIA kisses MALAKHII'S hands).

With great effort, great effort I have found you.

Scene 8

OLIA jumps to her feet. The FIRST GIRL and MUSIA come running up. The VISITORS walk up staggering.

OLIA
It is I who found him for you.

AHAPIA
I had a dream that an angel was playing on a golden reed pipe. Then suddenly . . . and it's Liubunia's father.

MUSIA
Is this really your father?

FIRST GIRL
Mira! Is this your father.

MALAKHII
I am not a father. I am the people's Malakhii. Can it be possible that you haven't read the first directive? I have cast off family state.

(The THIRD VISITOR looks at his watch, waves his hand, and runs off).

LIUBUNIA
Papon'ka my love! Don't look that I am this way. That I'm dressed like this.

MALAKHII
I've cast off family state I tell you.

LIUBUNIA
Forgive me papon'ka! This isn't really true. I am this way because I was earning kopeks in order to find you.

AHAPIA

Forgive her for her sins and for you God will dismiss even greater ones.

(OLIA does not take her eyes off

MALAKHII).

LIUBUNIA

Right away Van'ko[58] will come and we'll sit in and ride to the railway station. I have money. Fifty-three roubles already. I'll buy tickets for the reserved seats. Lemonade for the road. Oranges. You will lie down papon'ka. You will rest my loved one. You're becoming grey . . .

MALAKHII

I'm telling you there is no papon'ka! And no dear friend! There is the people's Malakhii, commissar! Peomalcom. The First!

LIUBUNIA

What am I to do now?

(OLIA speaks to MALAKHII).

OLIA

What is she to do now? You are misery. The misfortune of the people!

MALAKHII

Light the fire of universal love on the streets of your cities. Warm the weary. For this in my sky-blue countries they'll erect monuments.

LIUBUNIA

What am I to do now?

OLIA

We beg that he tell yet one more sky-blue lie. And you know about whom? About the dear ones who will return to us on a winter's night. Ha-ha-ha! How many of those dear ones already have slept with me? If it comes to accepting all of them in order to warm them from the weather, they would crush me. Musician! The Kolechka![59]

(LIUBUNIA staggers into the private room

as if she were sick. The girls and the

visitors react to OLIA).

MUSIA

Bravo! Bravo!

FIRST VISITOR

The Kolechka!

FIRST GIRL

Olia is going to sing the Kolechka.

(OLIA begins to sing the Kolechka with musical accompanyment).

I lost my ring
I lost my love,
Because of that ring
I will cry day and night.

My beloved went away, left me
With a child in my arms
Whenever I look at my child,
Then flooded with tears are my eyes
Because of you my dear child,
I go to the sea to drown.

(MALAKHII goes up onto the stairs).

MALAKHII

Hello! Hello! Pass this on by radio to everyone, everyone, everyone, who exists on the Ukraine. To the people, to the poplars, to our willows, to the steppes, to the cliffs, and to the stars in heaven.

OLIA

For a long time my blonde braid,
Trembled with the waters,
I waved with my right hand;
Goodbye my love, goodbye.

(MALAKHII continues by himself because OLIA now has finished singing).

MALAKHII

Pass on that the people's Malakhii is sad and a silver tear has trickled over his grey moustache and fell into the sky-blue sea. How tragic this is, that over sky-blue dreams he is sad.

(MALAKHII is surrounded by the girls and their VISITORS. They are all laughing and dancing. In this moment AHAPIA shouts).

AHAPIA

Liubunia has hung herself!

MADAM APOLINARA

Hung herself!

(MUSIA and the FIRST GIRL look into the private room).

FIRST GIRL

She hung herself!

MUSIA

Hung herself! Mira! I swear to God!

(The FIRST GIRL, MUSIA, and their VISITORS are taken with fear and run up the stairs to the door. AHAPIA speaks to MALAKHII).

AHAPIA

Your dearest daughter has hung herself!

MALAKHII

Don't be frightened O' loyal subject. She didn't hang herself, she drowned in the sea. More exactly . . . in the sky-blue sea.

Scene 9

OLIA walks in from the private room.

OLIA
I've taken her down. She's already dead.

(OLIA turns to MALAKHII).

Can you hear me? It is you who led her to it . . . to her death!

MALAKHII
It is better to catch the crescent moon because he urinates into the sea.

OLIA
He's finally gone crazy. After sky-blue dreams, where is there left to go?

(OLIA answers herself convincingly).

Why are you still thinking? There! Back again! To your work!

(OLIA ties a kerchief on herself and leaves with heavy footsteps).

Scene 10

MADAM APOLINARA comes in with a small box into which she stuffs a necklace, some gold bracelets, pieces of silk and so on.

MADAM APOLINARA
I may be a certain kind, but not a kind such as this one.

(MADAM APOLINARA spits on MALAKHII and runs out).

MALAKHII
And they spit on him and smote him across the cheeks. Then he took a golden reed and blew into it . . .

(MALAKHII pulls out his reed pipe).

. . . and played worldly sky-blue symphonies.

(MALAKHII plays into his reed pipe).

I am the world's shepherd. I'm pasturing my flocks. I pasture them, I pasture them and I'll play . . .

(AHAPIA has lit a candle. MALAKHII plays upon his reed pipe. It seems to him that he truly has created some sort of beautiful sky-blue symphony. MALAKHII doesn't notice that the reed pipe has become nasal and resounds with an odd dissonance).

END OF ACT V

NOTES

1. The source of The People's Malakhii for this translation is taken from the Ukrainian version of the text published by the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1955 under the title, Mykola Kulish-Tvory. The Academy's version is a duplicate of The People's Malakhii which was originally published by Kulish himself in the periodical, The Literary Fair, Vol. 9(139), August 1929. Kulish's archives perished during the Second World War and with them perished the first and second Berezil editions of The People's Malakhii. Thus The Literary Fair version, which is the third re-write of the play, remains as the only authentic record of The People's Malakhii.

The scene divisions within the five-act structure of The People's Malakhii are derived from the style of the French Scene. The description of the setting of the scenes through the stage directions, convey a lyrical and epic-like quality. This style is satisfying and constructive to a reading of the play. However for greater clarity to both the actor and the director, and for a naturalness which complements the text of the play, the stage directions have been transformed into the present tense. In addition the proper names of characters have been substituted in instances where they were originally designated by personal

pronouns of physical descriptions. For example a literal translation of the stage directions for scene two is: "The older daughter walked in. The middle daughter said to her." For clarity and naturalness, this stage direction has been transformed as follows: "Enter VIRA, NADIA speaks to her."

2. An interjection meaning either "Oh!" or "Ouch!" left in its untranslated form to convey a phonology to aid the rentention of the flavour of the original Ukrainian text. Tarasovna's lines throughout Act I have been intentionally stylized in translation to retain the same highly stylized form they have in the original text where they function as a vehicle for Tarasovna's over-dramatization of her situation.

3. A drug used as a sedative and an anti-spasmodic.

4. In the Ukrainian text this character is designated by the name "Kum". "Kum" takes on different meanings depending on its use in context. Andrusyshen gives it the following meaning in his dictionary:

> "kum (-ma) m. godfather,crony,gossip (person), intimate friend; ridnyi--, one invited to be a godfather (as distinct from the child's father who is simply kum)

This character's name in translation appears as Godfather, while all other references containing "kum" become "dear friend".

5. This term is used as a diminutive form of endearment towards Malakhii. For reasons of phonology if has been left as "papon'ka rather than translated as"dear father" or "papa".

6. The original published edition of The People's Malakhii in the periodical The Literary Fair Vol. 9 (pp. 139), August 1929, does not contain information which specifies which characters speak certain lines. Even though this does not effect the reading of the play as a piece of literature it does pose an obstacle to a director who would be assigning lines to his cast members. Since Kulish's characterizations are well drawn, these lines of dialogue are readily distinguishable, and therefore have been assigned to specific characters. The action of assigning the lines has enabled greater retention of the characterizations as drawn in the source because the individuality of the character's speech habits is able to be preserved in the translation. In all integrity to the original, in cases such as crowd reactions where these unspecified lines of dialogue contain a lack of information as to which character speaks them, their assignment has been left to the discretion of the dramaturge or director. The play's characters which are affected by the assignment of lines are: the Neighbors, Malakhii's daughters, the Patients, the Workers, Madam Apolinara's girls, and the visitors to Madam Apolinara's establishment.

7. A reference in the jargon of the time referring to militia-men.

8. Tarasovna delivers the line in a rapid, stacatto-like method.

9. New Soviet Economic Policy which started in 1921 and dealt with the elimination of military communism by replacing it with a series of farm and tax reliefs. Private enterprize was also allowed.

10. Church hymns which are sung during the Divine Liturgy.

11. An interjection which expresses wonder, surprise, or vexation. In this context Godfather uses it to express the feeling of wonder of having spoken to the head of the militia.

12. Reference to Dekhtiar'ov,a composer, who wrote this particular series of hymns for the Divine Liturgy.

13. A metaphor referring to the ideal Communist commune as characterized in Khvyl'ovyi's short story, "My Self".

14. Administrative Council of the People's Commissariat.

15. All Ukrainian Central Executive Committee.

16. A Ukrainian church hymn sung as part of a funeral procession.

17. The seventh sunday after Easter which is observed as a church festival commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles.

18. A diminutive term of endearment used by Tarasovna towards Malakhii.

19. District Executive Committee.

20. A church hymn praising Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and the Saints.

21. A work by F. Engels in 1878 in which is stated that he and Marx discovered a rigid system of historical laws that would lead to the inexorable necessity of socialism.

22. Taras Shevchenko, 1814-1861, great Ukrainian romantic poet, artist, fighter against tsarism and serfdom, founder of the new Ukrainian literature.

23. Malakhii's birthday.

24. See note 17.

25. One of four ancient and sacred books of Hinduism which consists of psalms.

26. The name of a psychiatric hospital in the city of Kharkiv.

27. A Soviet holiday called, International Women's Day.

28. An esoteric action of creating a new word by taking the first letters of the word "mad" and combining them with the word "corner". Only the group of characters which were present at the formulation of this new word would understand its meaning. Its use in the play is for parody of the extensive use of abbreviation which was in fashion during the beginning if the Soviet regime.

29. The structure of Godfather's dialogue produces the conveyance of the literal meanings of the names: Vira, Nadia, and Liubunia, through their demotactic context. To accomplish this same communication in English the daughters names have been translated into their literal meanings.

30. A religious order under the leadership of a man called Simon. The order constructed towers in which they stayed and awaited the Second Coming.

31. In the first Berezil edition of The People's Malakhii this speech is slightly different. Even though both the first and the second Berezil editions perished with almost all of Kulish's archives during the Secon World War, Sviatoslav Hordynsky has published the differences between those two editions and the published edition and third rewrite of the play which appeared in The Literary Fair, 1929. His sources were Kulish's manuscripts which he was fortunate enough to see in Lviv in 1943. Thus in the first Berezil edition Malakhii's speech reads as follows:

> Thirty million are looking through the dreams of the ages on this their highest institution. On this mount. The transfiguration of the Ukraine, into a new Mt. Tabor. And you, an ordinary clerk do not have the strength to put her placard into effect. No, once again I am convinced . . . .

32. A mountain in Palestine which holds the belief that Jesus Christ was transfigured there.

33. Before one has to look any further . . . .

34. The first Berezil edition reads

> Because my friend, my friend, who if not you came to your comrades who are special people who are old hands at revolution.

35. The published edition in The Literary Fair omits this conversation between Malakhii and Ahapia which occurs at this

point in the first Berezil edition.

MALAKHII: Tell me citizen, of what nationality are you?

AHAPIA: What do you mean?

MALAKHII: I'm asking you, are you Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish, a Tartár?

AHAPIA: I'm of Russian belief.

MALAKHII: It comes out that you're a Russian then.

AHAPIA: Perhaps Russian . . . well yes, A Russian.

MALAKHII: A Muscovite woman--

AHAPIA: No, no, In our race there were none of those.

MALAKHII: A clear example to my projects . . . it's a pity there are no commissars . . . how old are you Ahapia?

AHAPIA: Fifty-seven. No I've lied . . . fifty-nine . . . During lent . . . but yes fifty-seven. No, no, no, fifty-nine. It seems that I'm fifty-nine.

MALAKHII: Was there a revolution in your village?

AHAPIA: I don't know. I'm illiterate, and so I don't know what you are asking about.

MALAKHII: Were surplus appropriations taken? Were Makhno's men or Petlura's men there?

AHAPIA: Oh God, they took them. Petlura's men were there too. Yes, they came running on horseback.

MALAKHII: Were they red? Communists? Bolsheviks?

AHAPIA: The Bolsheviks were there too. Now they've all disappeared. Petlura's men and the Bolsheviks. But the Communists still haven't disappeared.

SECOND COMMANDANT: This comedy must be stopped.

(The SECRETARY rings Command Headquarters).

SECRETARY: Command Headquarters. Send anyone from the guard here.

(The SECRETARY turns to AHAPIA).

Citizen. Who have you come to see, and for what purpose?

AHAPIA: To get to Jerusalem if I can, comrade. Or whatever your name is.

MALAKHII: The revolution jumped into the village on horseback and today is only a dust cloud on a far away horizon. A sky-blue dust cloud. You heard. She is looking for the road to Jerusalem. Sold her house. This is tragic and comic.

AHAPIA: This is true. And to this my comrades if you would yet help me. At least tell if there is a road to there.

MALAKHII: You understand how it is necessary to reform the individual at the first opportunity--

SECRETARY: About this, everyone already knows--

GODFATHER: Without you they know this--

MALAKHII: Then urgently summon an economic planning council for the commissars. For them to investigate my projects. They have to be revived. And the Ukraine. And the Ukraine, I say. She has become an old beggar because she stood by the beaten road. A slut, covered with scabs, with a beggar's sack. What is the use if in that sack is Taras and Hrinchenko's dictionary . . . the entire culture. There is such a sky-blue distance today and she . . . is cracking sunflower. Detestful slave. . . revive her or kill her.

AHAPIA: I ask and no one knows if there is a road to there. Be so kind . . .

MALAKHII: Why to this time, have my projects not been investigated?

SECRETARY: I told you. Within a month.

MALAKHII: I demand it now!

SECRETARY: Yours is not the right to demand!

MALAKHII: I have been sent by the people!

GODFATHER: You lie my friend! All the neighbors, all the people sent me here to turn you back home.

MALAKHII: I walked through more than a hundred villages, small towns, and farms while coming to Kharkiv, the capital of the Ukrainian S.S.R. Till today the dust from the roads of the steppes is on my feet. I drank water from a hundred wells and springs while I was resting. I gossiped with the people. It is only next to the wells that our people with their mouths open wide, speak the truth.

36. A Greek mountain island which is an autonomous monastic district. During one time it contained hundreds of monastanies.

37. The first Berezil edition contains these lines of dialogue in addition to the ones which Malakhii speaks:

MALAKHII: Don't interrupt! Who's interrupting? Speak in Russian, don't rape the Ukrainian . . .

(THE SECRETARY takes the telephone away from MALAKHII).

SECRETARY: Comrade reformer! I beg you to order!

(MALAKHII walks away).

MALAKHII: I cannot stand it. How they've Ukrainianized! They cannot say cripple, cryple or crippal . . . . I ask, why is it necessary to Ukrainianize foreigners? As if in order to make the driver appear as a Ukrainian so it could not be noticed that he consumes twice as many calories.

38. People's Malakhii Commissar. See note 28 for further explanation.

39. In the first Berezil edition the following passage appears here:

MALAKHII: Are you a peasant?
OLIA: It seems that I am. I lived my childhood years in a village.
MALAKHII: A Ukrainian woman. I will quickly denounce this race. It stands in my way in matters of the reform of the individual . . . it watches. Doesn't allow . . . At least if there were a few worthy people besides Taras, but there is only the first-sergeant, the bandit, the translator . . . servants to other people.
OLIA: Don't get angry, they'll quickly let you go.

40. In the first Berezil edition this line is changed, and has the following additions:

MALAKHII: . . . I'll not only be a madman but a psychopath if I am late in going there. Do you hear the factory horn? Constant repairs. Even the heavens have been covered with lime . . . let me go. There is still the reform of the individual plus of the Ukrainian language from the point of view of the fullest socialism to be done.

41. After this line of Olia's the first Berezil edition contains the following lines:

> MALAKHII: No, plus another, I will answer . . . I have to convince you Olia! I am not joking! I will open myself to you to the very depths of my soul. I've written projects for the urgent reform of the individual, you understand. These projects are for the realization of the sky-blue dream. Everyone has that kind of dream. They are the most beautiful . . . sky-blue . . . . And so you understand everyone of former times forms these dreams in a cradle; that is, in his imagination both day and night. And they cry. Then when there is nothing to eat . . . they die. Then they carry them to the burial ground. There always have been these burial grounds of unrealized sky-blue dreams on our dry and bald steppes. There always have been. In my projects there is the key, the sol-do for realization. But I made only one mistake. I didn't write that the reform must be started after having enlightened the individual with x-rays. Let me go and I will add it on. I'm going to the A.C.P.C.
>
> OLIA: I cannot . . .
>
> MALAKHII: Olia! Here I am on my knees . . . before your feet . . . I pray to you . . . .

42. Refers to the change on February 14, 1918 to the Gregorian calendar (new style) from the Julian calendar (old style).

43. A church festival commemorating the change in appearance of Jesus on the mountain. Mat. 17.

44. Most likely a dike near the village constructed by a man called Zahnyboha.

45. A children's organization with emphasis on athletic prowess and political orientation.

46. A plant which is a creeper with blue, pink, or white flowers. Commonly grown as a ground cover. Its continued mention in folk songs, ballads, and romantic poems gives it a symbolic meaning in this context.

47. The announcement would most likely be made over a loudspeaker.

48. Lines from Taras Shevchenko's poem (see note 22) entitled, To Osnovianenko, written in 1839. The term "Sitch" refers to the Kozaks first permanent encampment on the Dnieper river's island of Khortitsia. The Sitch was destroyed by Catherine II in 1778. Osnovianenko (1778-1843) was a sentimentalist writer of long short stories who introduced the peasant into the literary scene. His insistance of writing in Ukrainian brought strong criticism against him from Russian critics.

49. Dnieprelstan Dam.

50. Lines from an untitled poem by Sergi Esenin (1895-1925) which was written in 1922. The First Visitor quotes these in Russian. Esenin's plight in his poetry was the dilemma of not being able to understand the revolution and the advantages of the Soviet system. He committed suicide by hanging himself.

51. Line from Esenin. (see note 50)

52. Line from Esenin. (see note 50)

53. Line from Esenin. (see note 50)

54. The first Berezil edition contains the following lines in answer to Musia's question.

MADAM APOLINARA: I am scared, dear visitors. The Macedonian's may hear . . . I'll be ruined.
KAZAN'KOV: Madam comrade. If anyone causes any trouble, I'm a militia man; and if you need anything, call on me . . . comrade Kazan'kov.

The character Kazan'kav appeared on the Berezil stage as a working class Party member and militia man. In The Literary Fair edition he became designated as merely a visitor.

55. In the first Berezil edition Olia has also brought a worker in addition to Malakhii.

56. In Madam Apolinara's establishment Liubunia uses the name "Mira".

57. In the first Berezil edition this line is spoken by the worker that Olia has led in with Malakhii.

58. Male friend of Liubunia's.

59. A Russian folk song.

60. The first Berezil edition contains these two speeches after the end of Olia's song.

> MALAKHII: Be quiet, the Ukraine is singing.
> WORKER (the same one Olia led in): Little Russia, as a matter of fact.

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